Issue 167 13 May 1995

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

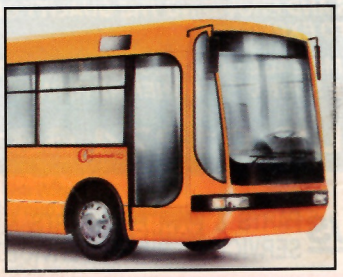
The PSV industry's news weekly

DEAL OUT OF THE BLUE

Volvo and Henlys buy Prévost to gain US foothold

NC SOLD ON

Plaxton gets its decker at last Page 4



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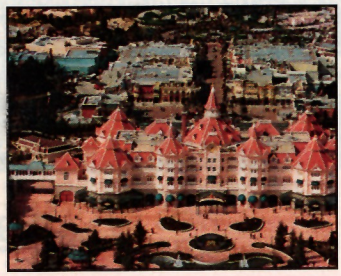
First chance to see new low-floor midi Page 8



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Breathing fire around Guildford Page 26

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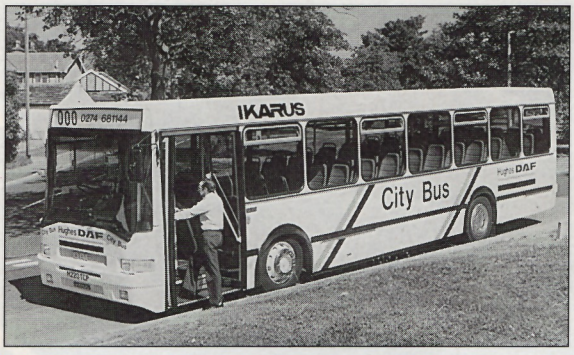

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Issue 167 13 May 1995

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly

WHO would have thought back in 1992 that stories of major expansion, export ambitions and booming PSV registrations could be headline news in 1995. Yet this is the case just three years after Plaxton's bus product led the Henlys coach and bus division's revival and Northern Counties was rescued by its management.

Contrast the state of the PSV market for the first four months of this year with that of the first third of 1992. Year-to-date figures had dropped from 867 in 1991 to a desperate low of 807.

Yet the SMMT figures at the end of April 1995 show a staggering year-on-year growth of almost 62 per cent with 1,485 registrations. Dramatic when you consider that the increase over three years is around 70 per cent.

It is no wonder that, against this remarkable background, the Henlys takeover of Northern Counties has been hailed as a coup by the financial analysts. Share price jumped and profit forecasts were lifted as the predictions became increasingly rosy.

The manufacturing industry is now following the leading lights among the operating groups. Rationalisation and consolidation of bus companies over the past 18 months is well documented.

Large advance orders have been a positive result but, with buying power in a small number of hands, the dice are loaded in favour of the customer.

Margins are squeezed as hard bargaining drives prices down. This inevitably points to pressure on costs and this is where Northern Counties and Plaxton will score as partners. Purchasing, marketing and design economies are brought within their grasp and, with exports also on the agenda, it seems that NC's nine per cent margin will soon be in line with Henlys 11 per cent.

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events

14 May: Basingstoke Festival of Transport and Auto Jumble, War Memorial Park, Basingstoke. Details from Tom Mansbridge on 0125 622376

15 May: SMMT conference - The New European Motor Vehicle Block Exemption, The Final Outcome? Details from Conference Secretary, SMMT, Forbes House, Halkin Street, London SW1X 7DS, tel 0171 235 7000, fax 0171 235 7112

17-19 May: 26th annual IRTE conference and display, Telford International Centre. Details from IRTE Services on 0171 630 1111, fax 0171 630 6677

27-28 May: AEC Society Annual Road-Run and Rally. Details from Tom Wilkins, secretary, on 01509 646660

4 June: SWT 1995 Fun Day including bus driver of year competition and charity fair - Quadrant Bus Station, Swansea. Rally entry forms should be returned to Phil Trotter, Marketing Officer, South Wales Transport Company, Heol Gwyrosydd, Penlan, Swansea

8 June: Buses and Town Centres - In or Out? Institute of Planning Studies conference, Florence Boot Hall, University of Nottingham. Details from Sylvia Trench, Institute of Planning Studies, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham

7/8 June: Study tour and seminar - Promoting Public Transport in Merseyside. Seminar is free and overnight accommodation is available at a discount rate. Contact Pindar plc, 1 Garstang Road, Preston

16 June: Buses For All 1995 Conference, featuring exhibition of low-floor accessible buses, G-Mex Conference Centre, Manchester. Details from Andy Holt on 0171 482 2325 or Richard Armitage on 0161 368 6603/5519

12-14 October: Coach & Bus '95, NEC, Birmingham. Details from CPT on 0171 831 7546

▼ Coach and Bus

Shares leap after news of expansion

Henlys: they're now 380p

by Mike Morgan

HENLYS shares leapt 44p to 380p with the announcement of major coach and bus expansion in the UK and North America.

The Plaxton parent consolidated its British bus-building capacity when it paid £10 million for Northern Counties and, in a £31 million deal, opened up a window of opportunity for the sale of Scarborough-built coaches in North America.

In a joint venture with Volvo of Sweden, Henlys now has access to the US through Prévost of Canada. In the first privatisation by the Quebec government, Volvo paid over £65 million for Prévost and promptly sold 49 per cent to Henlys.

Robert Wood, Henlys chief executive, said Prévost had a lot of business in the US with around 80 per cent of its output sold across the border.

He said Volvo and Plaxton wanted to penetrate the US and Canadian markets and it was better to buy into an existing business to gain direct access to the market.

● Three European manufacturers who have succeeded in selling coaches in America have all approached it differently. Neoplan, which sells coaches and buses, builds in its own factory in Colorado and has an established sales and service network.

Van Hool brings its vehicles in through an importer called ABC. And Kassbohrer, which expects to sell up to 60 coaches in the US this year, has established its own importer, Kassbohrer North American Inc in Gray, Maine.

▼ Coach

New coach range

PRÉVOST'S impressive trading results (below) reflect the introduction of a new coach range early last year combined with a general improvement in the demand for coaches and bus shells, productivity improvements and favourable exchange rate movements because of the weakening of the Canadian against the US dollar. According to Henlys, which now owns 49 per cent of Prévost, this "strong trend has continued into this year with sales and profits in the quarter ended 31 March 1995 substantially ahead of the same period last year."

	1992 £m	1993 £m	1994 £m
Turnover	49.7	53	67.6
Gross profit	12.2	11.8	17.4
Profit before tax	5	3.6	8.4
Gross profit margin	24.5%	22.3%	25.7%
PBT margin	10.1%	6.9%	12.5%

Net assets as at 31 December 1994 were £23 million

More NC bodies are going to Stagecoach

▼ Bus

Stagecoach order

THE first wave of Stagecoach's 100-vehicle Northern Counties bus order is being made for its subsidiary companies.

The 60 Palatine double-decks and 40 single-deck Paladin vehicles - fitted to Volvo Olympian and B10M chassis respectively - represent the first substantial Stagecoach order for the Wigan-based bodybuilder and are worth £5 million to NC. The first vehicles off the line are going to KHCT, Cleveland Transit, Hartlepool, Stagecoach South, East Kent Road Car and to Selkent.

● In April, Kowloon Motor Bus in Hong Kong gets 11 air-conditioned Paladins and, by May next year, competitor Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation is expecting Paladins.

▼ Coach

Prévost: Volvo back over the Atlantic

VOLVO Bus has returned to the North American market through the joint venture with Henlys for the takeover of Prévost of Canada.

The deal gives the European manufacturers access to the United States. Prévost will offer Volvo driveline components supported by an existing aftermarket service network and tri-axle Volvo B12-chassied Plaxton-bodied coaches are to be sold in North America.

Although Volvo has a strong US presence through its White truck subsidiary, Volvo Bus UK md Sandy Glennie said the group had decided buses were a core area and "you've got to be in North America."

From a record sales level of around 2,000 units in 1989, the coach market in the US and Canada slumped to a low of 1,000 units in 1991. But, since then, the market has grown steadily and in 1994 amounted to 1,500 units.

There are about 30,000 coaches on the road in the US and Canada and industry sources expect coach sales to continue to grow after a slower than normal replacement cycle. The normal useful life of a coach in North America ranges from 15 to 20 years.

There are three mainstream domestic makers of coaches in North America. MCI of the US and Canada, with its archetypal aluminium-clad coaches, is the market leader by volume. Eagle of Brownsville Texas is a relatively minor player with a troubled recent history, Mexican owned since 1990.

Prévost (pronounced Prevo) more than holds its own in this sort of company, building exclusive, so-

▼ Bus

Plaxton has decker after Counties buy

Parent company snaps up bodybuilder for £10m

by Mike Morgan

PLAXTON has its double-deck bus at last with a £10 million takeover of Northern Counties by parent, Henlys.

Wigan-based Northern Counties has a new range of bus designs. Its Paladin single deck on midi or full-size chassis competes with Plaxton's Verde and Pointer, but the Palatine decker on Volvo Olympian or DAF Bus DB250 completes Henlys' pack.

Northern Counties boasts an order book worth £7 million and is the UK's second largest manufacturer of double decker buses. However, a management and employee buyout in 1992 saved it from receivership.

The board, chaired by Manchester businessman, Trevor Egan, convinced venture capitalists to inject £500,000 into the loss-making bus bodybuilder, which was then part of the Greater Manchester PTA.

Turnaround has been dramatic. The newly independent company showed a small profit in its first year of operation, since when turnover and profits have grown consistently. For the year to March 1995 the company made pre-tax profits in excess of £1.4 million on a turnover of nearly £16 million. Mr Egan said: "The fundamentals of this business were always sound and I am delighted with the turnaround we have achieved."

Henlys chief executive Robert Wood, who takes over from Mr Egan as Northern Counties chairman, said the existing management team would continue. He said: "In mid-1991 Plaxton launched its bus product and is now market leader. It wanted to get into double deck fast and the takeover will help Plaxton directly by allowing it to offer the whole range to our bus customers."

Mr Wood said Northern Counties had a good reputation and would keep its existing product line. He said: "There may be rationalisation but it depends on our customers and what they demand."

"THIS GAME IS MUCH MORE FUN NOW I'M PLAYING WITH A DOUBLE DECK"

Integral coaches are stylish and sophisticated

▼ Coach and Bus

Sales: dramatic rise goes on

COACH AND BUS REGISTRATIONS

	April 1995 no.	April 1994 no.	Year to Date 1995 no.	1995 %	Year to Date 1994 no.	1994 %
Volvo	202	128	668	45	423	46.1
Dennis	104	52	438	29.5	272	29.7
Scania	41	9	116	7.8	28	3.1
DAF Bus	20	6	78	5.3	25	2.7
Optare	20	5	56	3.8	47	5.1
Bova	14	6	25	1.7	18	2.1
Others	53	30	104	6.9	104	11.2
Total	454	236	1485	100	917	100

COACH REGISTRATIONS

	April 1995 no.	April 1994 no.	Year to Date 1995 no.	1995 %	Year to Date 1994 no.	1994 %
Volvo	125	45	396	57.1	190	53.5
Dennis	24	9	88	12.7	34	9.6
Scania	29	8	65	9.4	21	5.9
DAF Bus	15	2	39	5.6	12	3.4
Bova	14	6	25	3.6	18	5.1
Others	46	26	80	11.6	80	22.5
Total	253	96	693	100	355	100

BUS REGISTRATIONS

	April 1995 no.	April 1994 no.	Year to Date 1995 no.	1995 %	Year to Date 1994 no.	1994 %
Dennis	80	43	350	44.2	238	42.3
Volvo	77	83	272	34.3	233	41.5
Optare	20	5	56	7.1	47	8.4
Scania	12	1	51	6.4	7	1.2
DAF Bus	5	4	39	4.9	13	2.3
Others	7	4	24	3.1	24	4.3
Total	201	140	792	100	562	100

The above table details all vehicles on designated PSV underframes registered last month in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands.
Source: SMMT

THE dramatic rise in PSV registrations continued into April. Total coach and bus deliveries are almost double the same month last year bringing the year to date figures up by 61.9 per cent from 917 to 1,485.

This is on top of the first quarter results when the registration figures produced by the SMMT showed a rise of one-third compared with the same period in 1994.

Coach registrations are up 95 per cent on the year to date with a phenomenal growth in April - up from 96 to 253.

Bus registrations so far this year total 792 compared with 562 at the same point in 1994.

The combined picture gives rise to optimistic predictions for the year as a whole. April has again supported projections of a market worth over 4,000 vehicles. CBW

phisticated and stylish integral coaches, particularly for the under-developed domestic tour and charter coach market and 'bus shells' for conversion into super-luxury (up to £500,000 a piece) motor homes.

Founded in 1924 as a family business, it was, until the Volvo and Henlys takeover, 37.5 per cent owned by the Province of Quebec. Its main manufacturing base is in Sainte-Claire near Quebec, where it employs the bulk of its 900-strong workforce.

On the back of a growing US economy, Prévost is scheduled to build over 500 vehicles this year - enough to give it 13 per cent of the North American market. It introduced a new coach range in Spring 1994 and now produces the Mirage/XL range on a three-axle underframe and the H5-60 as a five axle 18-metre long articulated coach. A 12-metre version of the artic is sold as the H3-40, which, unusually, particularly in North America, has a fibre composite outer shell.

Running gear is mainly American - Detroit Diesel engines, Allison gearboxes. However, although domestic preferences should dictate that that combination will be kept on, European-made componentry will certainly now be used as well.

In brief

Times added

NATIONAL Express coach, Network South Central train and Stena Sealink ferry times have been added to the cross bus company timetable *Bus Times* produced by Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach. It also includes, as usual, services operated by Brighton Blue Bus, Stagecoach Coastline and South Coast, Access Cars and services supported by East and West Sussex County Councils.

Extra lines

KENT County Council is expanding its public transport information Freephone line, which already handles 14,000 calls regarding bus and train times per year. A second line will be installed, which will be manned by a dedicated member of staff.

Vice-chairman

GRT chairman Moir Lockhead has been appointed vice-chairman of Grampian Enterprise. As such, he will support GE chairman Maitland Mackie in economic development work for northeast Scotland.

Priority appeal

NEWCASTLE'S three major operators have combined to appeal for more than 50 bus priority measures to be included in the city's urban development plan. Consultant Malcolm Buchanan, representing Busways, Go-Ahead Gateshead and Northumbria, argued at public inquiry there was an obligation for "Local plans to indicate where buses will be given priority."

Local influence

EIGHTY-two per cent of executives concerned with the management and planning of urban traffic think local authorities should have more influence over roads impinging on their local communities, according to a survey for Peek Traffic.

▼ Bus

K-Line goes into battle

Wakefield Citybus introduced

by Andrew Jarosz

COMPETITIVE services commence in Wakefield this weekend - as a new operation branded Wakefield Citybus is introduced by Huddersfield-based K Line Travel.

Frequent services on the Horbury to Outwood corridor will be supplemented by positioning journeys from Huddersfield and Middleton Arms, Leeds, and a fleet of five Leyland Nationals is being dedicated to the services.

Paul Roter from K Line, which also owns Taylors in Leeds, said he thought there were commercial opportunities in the city, where British Bus subsidiary has the monopoly of local services. "We know they'll hit us with everything they've got but I think we will still offer a good service."

Operations will initially start from the Huddersfield and Leeds depots but expansion plans see the whole operation being based at Leeds in the near future.

K Line: taking on British Bus' local services

▼ Bus

Management posts lost

BRITISH Bus' newly-acquired subsidiary, West Riding Group, has reorganised its management into three divisions resulting in the loss of about 10 management posts.

Managing director Brian Jackson is joined at board level by commercial director Neil Barker and engineering director Vernon Barfoot, both from Yorkshire Woollen. David Cocker moves up to finance director.

Woollen, based at Dewsbury, has division general manager Brian Field and divisional engineering manager Arthur Stacey.

Central division at Wakefield has dgm Stuart Bear from South Yorkshire Transport and dem Peter Jackson.

Eastern division covering Castleford, Pontefract and Selby has dgm John Shaw from Selby and dem Chris Massey.

Brian Jackson says the company is more responsive, although individual trading names in separate areas would remain unchanged. "These are too valuable a commodity to be discarded," he said.

● People: page 51

Re-organised West Riding Group is going in for smaller vehicles

▼ Bus

Minibuses only

WEST RIDING is limiting its new vehicles to minibus, with the purchase of seven Optare MetroRiders this month and an order for six Mercedes-Benz minis later in the year.

The company, which invested heavily in full-size single-deck buses every year since privatisation, has no full-size vehicles on order, and managing director Brian Jackson said the company was now considering its position for the future.

The delivery of the MetroRiders has virtually eliminated Dodge minibuses from the fleet, as well as providing the first new minibuses for two of the fleets.

Three short MetroRiders have been allocated to the Selby & District fleet, and two long-wheelbase minis are the first for the South Yorkshire fleet at Pontefract. An additional two long-wheelbase minis have been allocated to Wakefield, where the majority of the 52 Optare vehicles are operated.

Mr Jackson said the MetroRiders were proving extremely efficient in the company's fleet, but the Yorkshire Woollen division would be taking a small order of Mercedes minis in keeping with the policy of dual sourcing.

● Deals and Dealers: page 31

CBW

▼ Coach

Above us the waves

Channel Tunnel coach trials

by Andrew Jarosz

CONSIDERABLY more effort needs to be expended into the passage of coaches through the Channel Tunnel, as the Le Shuttle tests showed to operators, hundreds of group organisers and other invited passengers.

Apart from delays experienced by coaches stacking up to enter the purpose-built carriages, the main shortcoming of the whole series of trials was the limited public relations input from Le Shuttle staff, who left coach drivers and operators to provide explanations to passengers themselves.

Operators who had travelled long distances from the midlands, South Wales, Yorkshire and Lancashire were put into a stacking system for over three hours in some cases. This could play havoc with drivers' hours, and limited the time passengers had left for sightseeing and shopping in France to as little as three hours.

The passenger waiting area requires further thoughts on becoming fully passenger friendly. There is nowhere to sit outside, for example.

A little bit of understanding and PR from Le Shuttle staff at this stage would have been very welcome, as would a recognition that those coaches operating day trips from the farthest points in the UK should have some priority for an early crossing to compensate for the long road journeys to reach the port.

The actual 30-minute section of travel underground and below water is quite acceptable. Coaches load on to an open truck in the train and travel along it until they reach the first available carriage. This is then sealed and coaches drive forward at the end of the trip. In the trials, one coach per carriage was allocated because two are not permitted for safety reasons.

Once inside, passengers can stay on the coach or disembark and mill around. There isn't much to see, no seats or drinks machines. There are toilets, but not in the single-deck shuttle carriages carrying coaches. The walkway on either side of the runway is extremely narrow, leaving no margin for lifting side flaps in the event of a coach breakdown, which could cause a major hold-up.

As for providing a different "kind of experience", Le Shuttle fits the bill. As for providing a faster alternative to the ferry companies, there is a lot more to work on at this stage.

● Le Shuttle must successfully complete the tests before commercial services start.

Coaches drive down the train during loading

Only 30 minutes is spent travelling underground

▼ Coach

Cleveland Hart transplant for EYMS coaches

EAST Yorkshire Travel has expanded its operations into Cleveland with the takeover of vehicles and operations of Stockton-based Hart Coaches. The business, which will provide a base for the company's tours and excursions, was sold upon the retirement of its owners Bob and Anne Johnson.

The deal involves the acquisition of 11 of Hart's 15 coaches, and lease of the premises on the Portrack industrial estate. Existing contracts, private hire and excursions with a turnover of £0.6 million will be continued, as the fleet gradually assumes EYT identity and colours. The remaining coaches are being sold privately.

Hart Coaches was formed in 1980, through a need to get the Johnsons' daughter to school. A minibus was bought and a service started to the school, and the company has grown and developed as a family business since then. Double-deck buses have been owned by the company in the past, but the fleet at takeover comprised five Leyland Leopards and 10 Leyland Tigers. EYMS Group joint managing director Peter Shipp told *CBW* that over 10 per cent of EYT's business already came from Teesside. "This expansion will make it easier for the company to run an increasing number of its holiday tours direct from the Teesside area."

The business is currently being managed by EYT boss Graham Rogers and Mr Shipp felt that it was too early to predict any future management re-organisation. CBW

In brief

Rider's gesture

BADGERLINE subsidiary Rider York offered free travel for pensioners on Bank Holiday Monday in celebration of VE Day. With numerous commemorative events and a parade being staged throughout the city, the company thought a small gesture to help local people attend the events would be appreciated.

Map published

SHROPSHIRE County Council has published the 1995 edition of its public transport map, which shows the county's bus and rail network. The maps are being distributed through travel centres, tourist information offices and libraries in the county.

Teacher drivers

CEFNLLYS County Primary School of Powys is having its teachers trained in minibus driving and safety awareness by Peter Williams of Hendy Driving School, Builth Wells. Headmaster Huw Roberts thinks professional training will raise the school's standards and encourage other schools in the area to take a similar initiative.

Service upgrade

STAGECOACH East Kent has upgraded services operating out of Folkestone on Mondays to Saturdays. Higher frequencies, faster journeys and lower fares are being introduced on various routes. David Morgan, the operations manager for Stagecoach East Kent at Folkestone said: "These service improvements confirm our commitment to serving the local people of Shepway."

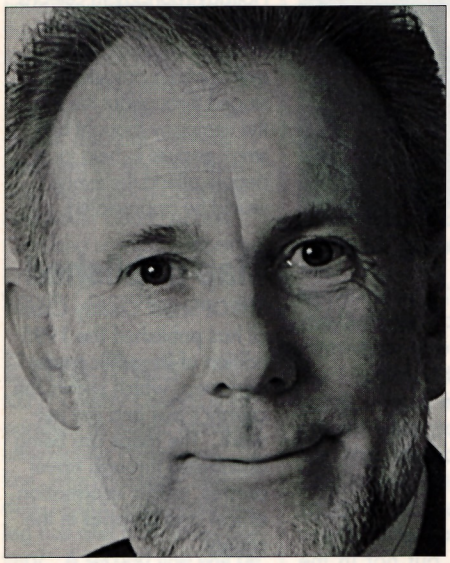
Village linked

Lothian bus operator Village Link is launching a commercial 'hail-and-ride' service between Currie and the multi-million pound Gyle shopping centre near Edinburgh airport.

▼ Coach and Bus

Cacciamali on show

Imported low-floor midibus in Paris



Robbie Hood: importing low-floor

by Richard Simpson

BRITISH operators will get their first chance to see the Robin Hood Vehicle Industries-imported Cacciamali TCM890 low-floor midibus at the forthcoming Paris UITP show on 28 May.

A left-hand-drive version of the vehicle, which has already attracted orders in Italy, will be on show and RHVI director Maurice Anelli will be present to answer British operators' questions.

The TCM890, which was featured exclusively in *CBW*, 11 February, has a rear nearside-mounted Iveco Euro Two engine and a totally flat floor throughout. A right-hand-drive version will be available on the British market by the end of the year.

RHVI is also poised to launch the first Cacciamali luxury midicoaches on to the UK market on 24 May.

▼ Bus

Tayside's disabled hit

BUS companies do not keep a register of people involved in Tayside's disabled passengers concession scheme, Tayside Public Transport chief executive Jack Henry has insisted in a letter to Dundee's *Courier and Advertiser* newspaper.

He was responding to Ewan Dow, the SNP administration leader within the regional council.

Mr Dow suggested free travel passes for the disabled were being abolished for budgetary reasons, adding that "it was becoming very hard for the bus companies to keep a register of people using the scheme and they were coming to the region asking for further recompense."

Mr Henry said: "The operating bus companies do not keep any records of the participants. The administration of the free scheme is entirely the regional council's function; operating bus companies and British Rail are the service providers.

"Our company, Tayside Public Transport, maintains the whole network with only limited support from the regional council and I would greatly welcome financial aid in this area in the future."

● As *CBW* went to press it learned that Tayside Regional Council's SNP administration is to forward proposals aimed at overturning the earlier decision to abolish free travel for many disabled people.

▼ Coach

Thumbs up for Bova

FENN Holidays of March has updated its tour fleet with the purchase of a 49-seat Bova Futura FHD which has been fitted with air conditioning in addition to the existing Futurair system.

The company operates three front-line tour coaches on its own tour programme which averages up to 100 departures per year. Its catchment area covers most parts of Cambridgeshire in addition to major points in north west Norfolk.

Proprietor Peter Fenn said the Bova offered the best seat and weight configuration for a coach with an air conditioning pack.

"We already have one Bova in our tour fleet and they're very economical to run and easy to drive," he said. The company also caters for some upmarket hires but the majority of its Continental work covers Spain, Italy and central Europe.

"Air conditioning is important for all the Summer tours that we operate into Europe," said Mr Fenn, "but I think it's equally important on UK work, with all the poor quality air we have in this country."

Air conditioning: 'equally important on UK work'

▼ Bus

Protection for drivers after vicious attacks

MANAGEMENT at Kelvin Central's Petersburn depot in Airdrie has taken interim steps to protect its drivers after two robberies within eight days. During the second attack, an off-duty driver was knocked unconscious with a baseball bat while the female driver had a gun put to her head.

Depot manager David Houston said that, prior to these incidents, an order was already placed for screens which can be opened from the driver's side.

However, as a temporary measure, around 20 buses with fitted screens have been brought in from other company depots to cover evening services out of Petersburn.

This action has been taken as a precaution, according to Mr Houston, who pointed out the generally low incidence of crime - four robberies in the last year - on services out of the 92-bus Airdrie depot. The new screens would be fitted as soon as possible, he said.

▼ Bus

Support bus industry - Watts

ROADS and rail minister John Watts has asked employers to lend their support to the bus industry.

Addressing a CBI lunch, Mr Watts said: "We are looking for strategies which promote sustainability without destroying the ability of business to compete.

"I hope that, increasingly, we will see companies in urban locations contributing to local authority park-and-ride schemes or negotiating with bus operators to provide services. For new developments in particular, this may be preferable to providing car parking for all employees, which will inevitably increase congestion."

▼ Bus

Group calls on LTB to look at staffing

Warning of growing problems on capital's buses

by Mike Morgan

A REPORT published by a left-wing pressure group in London warns of growing problems on the capital's buses if pay and conditions for bus workers are not improved.

Lambeth Public Transport Group (LPTG) claims bus passengers and workers are getting a bad deal due to the relentless financial pressures of tendering and bus privatisation.

It calls on London Transport Buses "to urgently examine the staffing problems facing some of the capital's biggest bus operators and look towards setting a formal minimum pay and conditions package for all bus staff in London."

But the report has been challenged by Keith Ludeman, md of London General, the operator of route 133, which was described by LPTG as "The Dole Kids Route".

Delays and cancelled buses are due to staffing problems at London General's Stockwell garage says the report. But Mr Ludeman said the route met LTB contract standards. He said: "Being a six-minute service it is one of the most frequent the company operates, yet achieves 98 per cent reliability." Mr Ludeman denies that staffing is a problem or that new recruits are put on the 133.

London General has been transformed since the £32 million management buyout with a profit of £2 million on its £50 million turnover. Mr Ludeman said post-privatisation changes "to improve the economic performance" had been negotiated on behalf of the 1,800 staff with the unions but admitted some people would be unhappy and leave.

▼ Bus

LTB night moves planned

LONDON Transport Buses has proposed making a number of changes to its Night Bus network in south west London.

LT Buses proposes:

- **Standardising Night Bus routes with similar standard routes whenever possible**
- **Eliminating overlap between day and night services to provide a truly co-ordinated 24-hour one.**
- **Providing regular departures throughout the night with gaps of no more than one hour**
- **Increasing service levels over the busiest sections.**

The changes are aimed at making the network less confusing to less frequent users and, if consultation is successful, will come into force in August.

▼ Bus

LT's design heritage on show

A NEW exhibition celebrating London Transport's design heritage opens at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden on 25 May. It will explore the development of LT's use of design throughout the century in its vehicles, publicity, architecture and corporate identity. Key icons of design history include the development of the LT logo, Frank Pick's introduction of poster advertising, Harry Beck's Underground map, the Routemaster and the 1938 Tube rolling stock.

▼ Coach

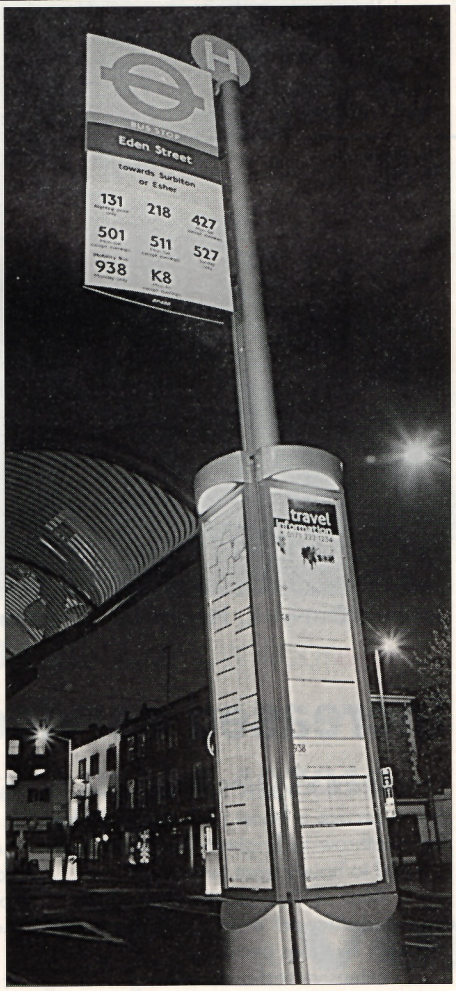
Take note of special events, police warn

OPERATORS running coaches into London are advised to take note of special events which will disrupt traffic.

The Metropolitan Police Coach Advisory Service has given notice of the following:

- Sunday 14 May. Cancelled: London Watersports Day - from 10am between Vauxhall Bridge and Waterloo Bridge.
- Tuesday 23 May to Friday 26 May . State visit of the Amir of Kuwait - roads closed in St James' Park for a short period.
- Tuesday 23 May to Friday 26 May 1995. Chelsea Flower Show. Set down/pick up permits still available from the Coach Advisory Service.
- Saturday 27 May. March and rally by African Liberation Support Campaign - Kennington Park to Trafalgar Square via Lambeth Bridge and Parliament Square.
- Saturday 17 June. HM The Queen Birthday Parade - Trooping the Colour - 10am.
- Sunday 18 June. Iskcon (Hare Krishna Movement) march - from Hyde Park at 12 noon via Hyde Park Corner, Sloane Square, Chelsea Bridge to Battersea Park.
- Saturday 24 June. Pride Trust Annual Lesbian and Gay Pride March - 11am from Hyde Park to Great Smith Street followed by festival in Victoria Park between 3pm and 10.30pm.
- Saturday 19 August and Sunday 20 August. VJ Celebrations.
- Saturday 9 September. March and rally by Campaign for Rights of Survivors of child sexual abuse (CROSS) - Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square.
- Saturday 11 November . Lord Mayors Show - Guildhall to Royal Courts of Justice.
- Sunday 12 November. Remberance Sunday - events in Central London morning and afternoon.

Further information on 0171 230 3072 or fax 0171 230 3567



Illuminating: the new LTB bus stops

▼ Bus

Illuminated displays introduced

LONDON Transport Buses has introduced new high-technology timetable displays at bus stops in Kingston.

There are currently 20 stops in the area with timetable displays which become illuminated at night, and this facility will be extended to cover between 30 and 40 stops.

Development manager Dick Cordey said: "We have been reviewing the design of bus stops and the provision of information at them. The illuminated stops, which use light-sensitive equipment, have been introduced on an experimental basis and are part of a pilot study. A thorough evaluation of the scheme, to include passenger comments, will take place before the decision to go ahead on a larger scale is taken." CBW

With a stunning new green and purple livery the new fleet of Mercedes-Benz minibuses had a Champagne send-off

▼ Bus

Ten Mercedes for Devon General

As passenger numbers soar company invests £500,000 in larger minibuses for Exeter

by Mike Morgan

IN the latest phase of Ford Transit replacement, Devon General has invested £500,000 in a 10-strong fleet of Mercedes-Benz minibuses for the T route in Exeter.

The new fleet was given a champagne send-off this week when deputy mayor and deputy mayoress Mr and Mrs Barry McNamara launched the service at the Buckerell Lodge Hotel in Topsham Road, Exeter. Head chef Robert Drakett got the guests into the mood with a topical bus-shaped sandwich.

The new 21-seater M-B 709 Marshall-bodied buses are larger and more spacious than their predecessors which inaugurated the Topsham service and the next phase of DG's fleet replacement will see new vehicles for its K route to Countess Wear later this month.

Harry Blundred OBE, chairman and managing director of Devon General, said: "It might be hard to believe that, only eight years ago, Topsham and Countess Wear had no bus service to the High Street.

"Since then Devon General's Transit minibuses have changed the face of bus travel and passenger numbers have soared. The Transits that launched the T service seven years ago have done a great job, but now it is time to replace them."

Continuing with the route colour coding which identifies the different Exeter service, the latest vehicles have a stunning green and purple livery. Destination blinds on the front and sides provide customers with easy-to-read route information.

▼ Coach

REM partners will go on trial

PARTNERS in Cardiff-based REM Coaches have been committed for trial at Cardiff Crown Court accused of aiding and abetting one of their drivers to drive dangerously.

Royston and Clive Anthony Evans, of Ferry Road, Cardiff, are accused of aiding and abetting Simon Cosh of Ely, Cardiff.

Mr Cosh was driving a coach which was in collision with a lorry on the A40 Ross-on-Wye to Monmouth road, injuring 17 children and four adults from the Llandaff Church in Wales Junior School, who were returning from a trip to Midlands Safari park. Mr Cosh suffered serious leg injuries.

Both men were remanded on unconditional bail.

Jetlink: Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted support the new services

▼ Coach

Increased services from Jetlink

SPEEDLINK Airport Services gives its Jetlink service a boost this weekend when the Heathrow to Brighton frequency is increased to hourly from two-hourly.

Also Jetlink starts operations to Stansted Airport every two hours and Norwich six times per day.

Extensive radio advertising is being used to promote the services in the Brighton and Norwich areas.

The existing northern section of the service connecting Heathrow and Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Luton, Luton Airport and Stevenage receives an improved service.

Support for the revised services comes from Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted airports.

▼ Coach

R&M fire suspicious

A FIRE at a coach firm in Cornwall was probably arson, police and fire brigade officers have concluded.

The fire at R&M Motors in Par destroyed two coaches valued at more than £20,000 and damaged two others.

A storage tank containing 11,000 litres of diesel fuel was also destroyed. Investigators are now searching the site.

A police spokesman said: "It seems the fire started in the coaches. There was reasonable wind blowing and it could have been worse as other coaches were in close proximity." CBW

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▼ Bus

More regulation is needed - Carsberg

Support wanted for small operators

by Richard Simpson

THE director general of fair trading, Sir Bryan Carsberg, has thrown his weight behind growing calls for more regulation in the bus market to protect smaller operators.

He wants to see a system of class licensing, similar to that which already operates in the telecommunications industry, introduced with the aim of creating competition rather than controlling it.

Giving evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Transport during its current investigation into bus deregulation, Sir Bryan has admitted that the current regulatory framework controlling bus competition is too slow to be effective.

In contrast, he points out, that, when a merger is proposed, there is power to stop the parties taking any action which might prejudice the reference, and an automatic prohibition on the parties acquiring interests in each others' shares.

The DGFT is normally able to use the threat of these measures to obtain undertakings not to progress the merger during the inquiry. No such powers exist where allegations of predatory behaviour by one bus company against another are made.

Turning to monopolies, Sir Bryan thinks the threat of potential competition is no longer as potent a force as it once was. Big bus companies have the weight to deal with any competition from a small operator and the reputation for doing so, while mutual forbearance prevents large companies from invading what they see as each others' territories.

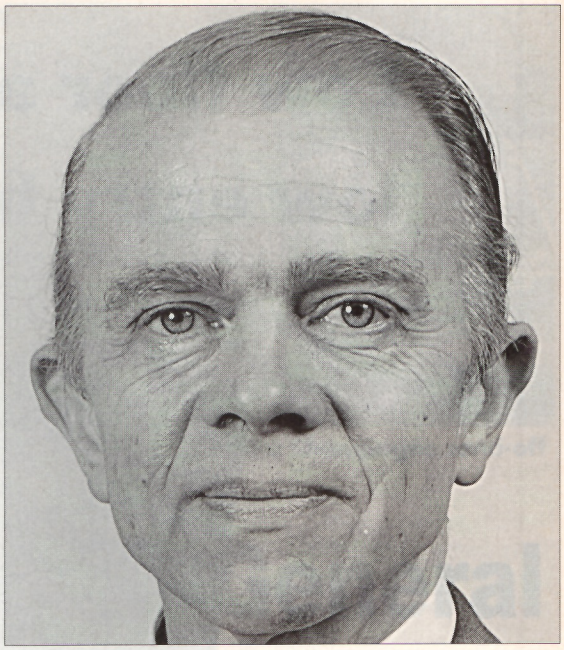
Sir Bryan remains wedded to the ethic that competition is best; its benefits are "no different from those in any other industry." Class licensing is seen as a method of promoting fair competition and good customer service, while outlawing destructive and anti-competitive practice.

The system would work like this: The licence would be issued permitting a firm to operate bus services subject to certain conditions. General rules would apply throughout the country, but specific local conditions could be put in place as well.

These could include, for example, detailed requirements over anti-competitive behaviour, or co-operation on timetabling.

Sir Bryan said: "Such a scheme would be conducive to a definition of a number of operating rules, definitions which would be helpful to operators in giving a clearer indication than at present of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

"It would be flexible - procedures could be made available for changing the rules. It would enable faster action to be taken to deal with problems such as anti-competitive behaviour; and it would bring buses into line with other utility regulation which involves similar problems."



Sir Bryan Carsberg: wants class licensing

▼ Coach

CPT group on Cantabrian trip

CPT Western Region members have returned from a successful educational trip to Cantabria organised by regional secretary Roy Anderson.

Run in conjunction with Brittany Ferries and DCA Touristic, the trip included a visit to the Irizar coach factory in the Basque country.

It followed the region's annual dinner at Dawlish Warren. This was preceded by an innovative trade show that Mr Anderson said was considered a success, "although it would have been nice to see more attending."

Members of the CPT's Western Region during their educational trip

▼ Nostalgia

Decker is museum star

ONE of the stars when the Castle Point Transport Museum opened its doors on Easter Monday was an unusual 1949 Leyland double decker.

The OPD2/1-chassied bus, NEH 453, started life as a 35-seat Weymann-bodied single decker, but was fitted with its current Northern Counties decker body in 1954.

It is housed at Castle Point, Essex, alongside over 30 privately-owned preserved vehicles, including 1954 ex-London Transport green RT-type RT4497 which joined NEH on the roste, providing a free bus service to ferry visitors between Labworth car park and the museum.

The open day was a new event intended to raise much- needed funds for the Castle Point Transport Museum Society, a registered charity based at the old bus garage in Point Road, Canvey Island.

Museum chairman, Peter Wise, said: "We saw an opportunity to stage an event during the Easter period in addition to our regular October open day, and decided at relatively short notice to go ahead.

"Because of the age of the museum building, we find that we're having to invest heavily in structural repairs and redecoration to keep it open to the public." CBW

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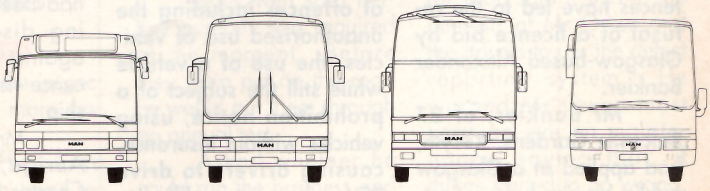

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▼ Maintenance

Duration cut to the end of September

TUDOR Thomas's licence duration has been cut to expire at the end of September.

Mr Thomas, of Pickfords Yard, Upper Bank, Pentrechwyth, Swansea, who trades as Blue Line Coaches, of Swansea, appeared at a Cardiff disciplinary inquiry before South Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh.

Mr Thomas said he had not been fit to cope with the maintenance of his vehicles due to illness and an accident. His problems arose 12 months ago when he suffered a leg injury and had to rely more and more upon his fitter.

He had now engaged the services of a commercial garage to carry out inspections and, with the assistance of his fitter, rectify any defects found. There had been a fleet check carried out by DoT vehicle examiners in June and there had been no problems.

Mr Thomas agreed with the commissioner there had not been much of a system in operation previously. He said there was now a flow chart showing when inspections were due and a system of driver defect reporting was now in force. Letters had been sent to the drivers pointing out their responsibilities.

Commenting on a vehicle which had attracted a number of prohibitions, Mr Pugh said it was "a well-known coach" which had previously belonged to Atlas Coaches, which recently had its licence revoked.

Mr Thomas agreed he had purchased the vehicle but said it had been scrapped and was being cannibalised for spares.

Cutting the licence duration, Mr Pugh said Mr Thomas had been very close to having his licence revoked. His concern was that Mr Thomas was operating very old buses.

If he continued to collect prohibition notices showing a significant failure of maintenance, Mr Thomas would be back before a disciplinary inquiry, his licence would be revoked and he would be banned from holding a licence.

Directing that the renewal of the licence be considered at a further public inquiry, and that DoT vehicle examiners carry out a fleet inspection before the end of September, Mr Pugh said he hoped Mr Thomas realised the seriousness of the matter.

▼ Licensing

Application refused

PENDING prosecutions for a series of alleged offences have led to the refusal of a licence bid by Glasgow-based Alexander Bankier.

Mr Bankier, of 27 Balcastle Gardens, Kilsyth, had applied at a Glasgow public inquiry before Scottish traffic commissioner Michael Betts for a new restricted two-vehicle licence.

The commissioner was told Mr Bankier was facing prosecution accused of offences including the unauthorised use of vehicles, the use of a vehicle while still the subject of a prohibition notice, using vehicles without insurance, causing drivers to drive PSVs when not qualified to do so, and using vehicles without Certificates of Initial Fitness.

▼ Regulation

Traffic regulation to control buses o

Manchester TRC with seven conditions imp

by Michael Jewell

NORTH Western traffic commissioner Martin Albu has imposed a Traffic Regulation Condition to control the operation of buses along the Wilmslow Road, in Manchester, reputed to be one of the heaviest bussed routes in Europe.

The TRC, which came into effect on 22 April, has seven conditions, namely:

1 No bus shall stand, pick up or set down passengers in the provision of a local bus service, except at designated stops on the Wilmslow Road between Willowbank and Old Hall Lane, Fallowfield.

2 Buses shall depart as soon as all intended passengers waiting in the queue at the bus stop have boarded, except at the bus stand north of Langley Road, where they may wait for a maximum period of five minutes if space permits.

3 No bus shall stop to pick up and set down passengers at both the bus stop located between Cawdor Road and Mabfield Road and at the stand north of Langley Road.

4 No bus on a service that has not travelled from south of the junction

▼ Maintenance

Operator gets green light

COACH operator Haydn Owen was granted a new licence in his own name at a Manchester public inquiry — after North Western traffic commissioner Martin Albu was told a licence Mr Owen held in partnership with David Wilson, trading as Eagle Travel, of Bebington, Merseyside, was being surrendered.

The commissioner had been considering taking disciplinary action against the six-vehicle licence held by the partnership.

Mr Owen, trading as Auriga, of 24/26 New Chester Road, New Ferry, Bebington, had applied for a new national licence authorising the operation of two single deckers and two minibuses.

Mr Owen told the commissioner that Mr Wilson was no longer a partner, the partnership having been recently dissolved after they fell out. He agreed Mr Wilson had been the nominated transport manager but said he had informed the Traffic Area he now had a new transport manager. Mr Owen had sat the CPC examination in March and he should have the results soon.

Two immediate and one delayed prohibition had been issued

Mr Albu pointed out Mr Owen should have informed the Traffic Area immediately the partnership was dissolved.

DoT vehicle examiner Geoffrey Chan said he carried out a maintenance investigation in November. Four vehicles were being operated. He inspected three vehicles and issued two immediate prohibitions and one delayed.

Inspections and maintenance were carried out in house by Mr Owen and that arrangement ought to be adequate. The inspection records available were not fully completed and some showed limited faults. A driver defect system said to be in operation showed few defects and he was told defects

condition imposed n Wilsmlow Road

sed by traffic commissioner Martin Albu

of Wilmslow Road and Palatine Road in Withington shall stop to pick up or set down at the bus stand between Cawdor Road and Mabfield Road except: (a) Those coming from south of Mauldeth Road along Egerton Road on to Wilmslow Road. (b) Those coming from west of Yew Tree Road along Wilbraham Road. (c) Those coming from east of Birchfields Road along Moseley Road.

5 No bus shall stop in such a way as to block or restrict the visibility of the entry and exit of vehicles from and to side streets over this section of Wilmslow Road.

6 No bus shall, except in the bus stand north of Langley Road (and within the maximum time limit specified above to wait at this stop), be left unattended by its driver except in an emergency over this section. (Note: unattended being defined as being the driver not in the driving seat.)

7 No bus shall stop to pick up passengers at the bus stop between Cawdor Road and Mabfield Road from the offside of any other bus using the kerbside positions at this stop, even if a potential passenger signifies his intention to board the bus.

Left: All operators heading for the Wilmslow Road are affected by the new Traffic Regulation Condition

▼ Licensing

Howes' licence revoked

TREVOR Howes' seven-vehicle national licence has been revoked by Brigadier Compton Boyd, the Eastern traffic commissioner . Mr Howes, of 35 Walpole Road, Halesworth, trading as Advance Coaches, of Halesworth, Suffolk, appeared before the commissioner at a Cambridge disciplinary inquiry.

▼ Licensing

Authorisation up, but...

THOUGH increasing the authorisation of Ray Davies' O-licence from two to four, South Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh has cut its duration to the end of September.

Mr Davies, of 60 Maple Drive, Brackla, Bridgend, trading as Hawthorn Travel, of Bridgend, appeared at a Cardiff disciplinary inquiry after a conviction for the unauthorised use of a vehicle.

Mr Davies said he had been out of the country when the offence was committed. The circumstances of the offence were that, on the day in question, one of his minibuses had broken down. His drivers failed to get another operator to cover the service and it was decided to hire in a self-drive vehicle.

Questioned by the commissioner, Mr Davies agreed he had three vehicles, although he was only authorised for two. He said he had applied to increase the authorisation to three in June last year and had assumed the application would be granted.

Increasing the authorisation, and cutting the duration, Mr Pugh said the proceedings had not been related to maintenance in any way. He accepted what Mr Davies had to say and that he had been let down. The increase in authorisation would now allow each vehicle to have a licence identity disc.

after inquiry told of partnership troubles

were being reported verbally.

Offering explanation for the various prohibitions issued, Mr Owen said one vehicle had been presented for test when it was not ready. It had only been recently acquired and when it was presented again it passed. They had not used that vehicle.

On another vehicle the floor had not been fastened down. The floor was very heavy and he had not realised it had to be tightened down. That had now been done. On another vehicle the emergency door buzzer had been disengaged.

The driver had been steam cleaning the floor through the emergency door. Even with the keys out the buzzer would work and that was why it had been disengaged.

On one vehicle the emergency switch had a wire off, said Mr Owen. There were also other things wrong with that vehicle and as a result the fitter was dismissed. The vehicle concerned had not been used recently.

Mr Owen said he had now taken care of the problems. He now did the inspections himself and he knew what Mr Chan expected. These were not excuses but reasons he had discovered after the event.

He had taken the CPC course and he had purchased the manual that showed how to inspect vehicles. With that book and his experience over the last year, it was all he needed.

Mr Albu said that, looking at the inspection sheets Mr Owen had provided, there seemed to be a fair amount of work that needed doing. Mr Owen needed to keep the inspection sheets in a more systematic manner.

Mr Owen said he had taken care of the problems

The Traffic Area should also be kept informed about which vehicles were in possession. The Traffic Area had not known about some of the vehicles inspected by Mr Chan.

Mr Owen said that, at the moment, he was using two vehicles. The Eagle Travel licence would be surrendered if the new licence was granted.

Mr Albu said on that basis he would take no action against Eagle Travel and he would now look at the new application.

Mr Owen said neither minibus was required at the moment. Before they were put on the road he would put them through an annual test.

Asked whether he could run the business and look after the maintenance of four vehicles, Mr Owen said that, if he found he could not, he would employ a fitter. He preferred it that way.

Asked how a driver who found anything wrong reported it, Mr Owen said he asked them when they came in if there was anything wrong. There was a defect reporting system available, it was a question of getting them to use it.

Granting the licence, Mr Albu said it was in the interests of Mr Owen and the drivers to use the defect reporting system. He warned Mr Owen must keep an eye on maintenance, saying that, if things started to go wrong, he would have to think about getting a fitter in.

▼ UK

Punters not happy - report

MANY a coach operator knows that quality counts when it come to organising a group tour, so a new report by market research firm Mintel makes timely reading.

In a study of travel trends, Mintel found that some travellers, who regularly booked package holidays, had become so disillusioned by overcrowding and poor accommodation, they had started to bypass agents and made independent travel arrangements.

Some tour operators, the study noted, had responded by allowing greater flexibility and the opportunity to tailor their own packages.

Obviously, coach operators cannot do the latter, but they should listen to their customers and make sure short breaks and extended tours are well-planned and the accommodation is up to standard.

▼ Europe

Disneyland is to use only wholesalers for bookings

New arrangement will apply to on-site accommodation

by William Golden

DISNEYLAND Paris says it is dealing with an unprecedented number of inquiries.

And the UK and Ireland marketing and sales office in Avonmore Road, London, has made a move that may not be popular with small operators.

From 1 May all on-site accommodation will be directed through three wholesalers - Albatross, Greatdays and ICT - for bookings from 1 November onwards.

Any off-site arrangements will not be affected by the new deal.

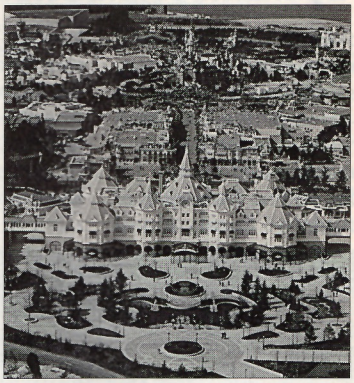
Disneyland Paris will continue to deal directly with upwards of 15 UK operators, but the new measures will apply principally to the smaller operator who may only make one trip a year and, as such, may not be aware of the procedure. Stuart Appleby, of Appleby Coaches, served on what was then the Euro Disney Coach Council. His Louth-based company will still deal direct with Disneyland Paris.

Mr Appleby said: "The number of inquiries has exploded and the staff could not cope."

He estimated going through a wholesaler would add about 10 per cent to the cost of a package to the French theme park. Michael Linnane, UK and Ireland group accounts manager for Disneyland Paris, has written to UK coach operators informing them of the change.

He has told them the three wholesalers will have dedicated Disney desks to service requirements. He said the streamlined approach "will allow us to simplify the booking procedure for our on-site product."

● What do the smaller coach operators think of the new scheme? Write and let us know.



Deal: Disneyland Paris

What Disneyland Paris told operators

"... it is clear that we need to simplify further the channels of communication between ourselves and the coach industry.

Recent independent market research carried out on our behalf found that coach operators still found it difficult to buy and package our on-site product be it directly through ourselves or, indeed, a wholesaler.

To overcome this and to further simplify procedures our on-site accommodation will be directed through three selected wholesalers; Albatross, Greatdays and ICT. This new procedure will take effect from 1 May for bookings from 1 November '95 onwards."

▼ UK

Hardy's top-flight performance

ACTOR Robert Hardy proved he had more than one string to his bow by "topping out" the £42.5 million Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds.

The veteran star of stage and screen - best known for his role as Siegfried Farnon in *All Creatures Great And Small* - is pictured using his own version of a late medieval war bow to shoot a specially-made "whistling" arrow from the museum's roof. Making sure nobody came to any harm is Yeoman Warder David Chenier, representing the Royal Armouries link with its historic home, the Tower of London.

The Royal Armouries is opening next year and will have 3,000 years of military history on show.

There will be weapons from around the world, film shows, shooting galleries, displays of martial arts, jousting tournaments, and other attractions.

▼ UK

Stena views year with caution after £34m loss

STENA Line made a £34.2 million loss for the first quarter of the year. This compares to a £26.6 million loss for the same period last year, despite Stena recording a three per cent increase in turnover to £141.7 million.

Passenger numbers fell by eight per cent overall - the group did not separate results for the UK subsidiary, Stena Sealink.

The Swedish-based group initially had expressed concern that profits for the whole of 1995 would be affected by the Channel Tunnel, but fears probably have been allayed by conflicting reports about the actual opening of Le Shuttle's coach service.

Bo Lerenius, Stena Line's chief executive, said: "This year's profits will be on a par with those for 1993 and 1994.

"The figure will be between £26 and £37 million depending on the performance of the Channel Tunnel and the state of the Swedish travel industry." CBW

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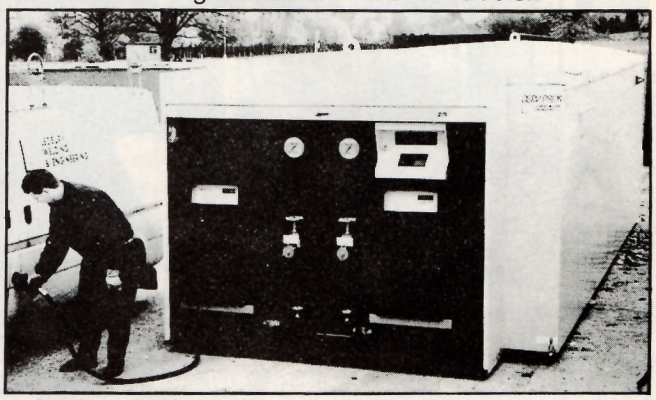

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▼ International

African adventure launched by Contiki

CONTIKI is using the worldwide interest in this month's Rugby World Cup to kick start its first programme to South Africa.

The youth market coaching specialist's 24-page Africa brochure makes it one of the first operators to venture into this region since South Africa came in from the political cold.

On offer is one tour inside the country, plus itineraries in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Travel will be in luxury coaches, except for safaris where 4x4 vehicles will be used. Victoria Falls, the Kruger National Park in South Africa, and Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe will be among the venues visited.

The tours are due to begin in September and there will be discounts for groups and other incentives.

Contiki's UK headquarters are in Bromley, Kent.

▼ UK

Building on success

All systems go as Fantasy Island gears up for opening

by William Golden

THE final countdown to the opening of the Magical World of Fantasy Island has started - and already the multi-million pound Lincolnshire attraction is making plans for expansion.

Fantasy Island, at Ingoldmells four miles north of Skegness, opens on 27 May. The response from coach operators and group organisers has been such that Blue anchor Leisure Ltd, the developer, is planning a second phase in 1996 that will include a themed hotel with 100 bedrooms.

This move is in response to the remarkable take-up of the caravan fleet, where many weeks are fully booked already.

Blue Anchor chairman John Woodward said: "Having a hotel on site will mean Fantasy Island can open up the market for short breaks."

There will be more than 40 rides and attractions in the indoor resort, which is dominated by a 100 ft glass and metal pyramid. Admission will be free and there will be free entertainment all through the day in the family show bar.

Rides and attractions will be open daily from 10am to midnight. There will be ample coach parking.

For more information call 01754 872030.

▼ UK

Celtica opens

CELTICA, the £2.5 million development in Machynlleth, the Centre for Alternative Technology, opened as planned, despite one of its major building contractors going into voluntary liquidation.

The hi-tech project - funded by Montgomeryshire District Council and cash from the EU - has been hosting a series of Community Weekends at reduced rates. These run until 27 May, when full prices will be charged and Celtica opens seven days a week.

The official opening is due to take place in the middle of next month.

▼ Europe

Check in for a smooth ride

COACHES travelling on P&O European Ferries' Dover to Calais route this Summer will benefit from a new facility.

The company has appointed a team of group representatives to provide a free, 24-hour service to assist coaches upon arrival, ensuring a smooth transfer through the port and on to the ship.

Port on call: P&O has launched a new service for coaches

Peter Stratton, general passenger sales and marketing manager, said: "P&O European Ferries carried more than 100,000 coaches on the Dover-Calais route in 1994, so the introduction of this new facility underlines the importance of the coach market to the company.

"The continued development of our port operations will ensure that coach operators and their passengers enjoy an efficient, problem-free check-in."

The scheme will run until September and, if it proves successful, will be introduced year-round.

As Britain's biggest ferry operator, P&O European Ferries operates five ships on the route, with up to 25 return crossings a day.

CBW

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WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Athens	18C/64F	Madrid	22C/72F
Amsterdam	24C/75F	Oslo	17C/63F
Berlin	21C/70F	Paris	25C/77F
Brussels	23C/73F	Rome	18C/64F
Dublin	19C/66F	Stockholm	15C/59F
Lisbon	27C/81F	Vienna	18C/64F
Luxembourg	21C/70F	Zurich	21C/70F

DIESEL PRICES

(Courtesy AA Roadwatch)

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.48	Netherlands	0.50
Belgium	0.51	Norway	0.68
Eire	0.53	Poland	0.23
France	0.47	Portugal	0.43
Germany	0.50	Spain	0.43
Italy	0.50	Sweden	0.62
Luxembourg	0.41	Switzerland	0.61

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	15.10 Sch / £	Italy	2,645 Lire / £
Belgium	44.25 BFr / £	Netherlands	2.43 Gld / £
Denmark	8.50 K / £	Norway	9.77 NKr / £
Eire	0.97 Punt / £	Portugal	229 Es / £
France	7.65 FFr / £	Spain	192 Pta / £
Germany	2.16 DM / £	Sweden	11.61 SKr / £
Greece	356 D / £	Switzerland	1.78 SFr / £

We must wake up before it

'This legislation is a time-bomb which, perhaps unknown to its makers, has the capacity to decimate the coach industry'

OPERATORS appear to be very laid back at the prospect of having perhaps one third or more of their fleets scrapped overnight. The axe may not, of course, fall evenly on every operator but my best guess is that, if the draft regulations on seatbelts are implemented, as they stand, within 18 months at least one third of the coaches currently in use in this country will suddenly become worthless.

Wake up! Do not be beguiled by the ministerial statements that seatbelts will only be required in coaches and minibuses used specifically for the transport of schoolchildren. This does not mean only dedicated vehicles. If the draft regulations are approved as written, any coach or minibus carrying more than a minimum number of children aged three to 15 to or from school, between school premises or otherwise on an organised trip, will have to be fitted with seatbelts. The number of pupils shown as the minimum in the draft is **THREE**.

The regulations will not apply to buses. Coaches and minibuses will only be exempt when carrying children on a registered local service which has not been provided by the local education authority, to fulfil their home-to-school transport obligations.

Thus, within a year of implementation of the proposed regulations, any minibus or coach which is ever used for home-to-school transport contracts, swimming baths and playing fields movements, or school or youth private hire, must have Kite-marked lap-belts fitted to approved mounting points. The DoT target date for all this to be in place is September 1996.

If you have spoken to the manufacturers of vehicles in your fleet (always assuming they are still in business) about them giving the necessary approval for seatbelt anchorage points, you may well find this approval is simply not forthcoming for vehicles more than about eight years old.

In simple terms, this means the older vehicles most used for the carriage of children are the ones in which seatbelt fitment is least possible. You and I understand that the amount of carriage of children done with coaches progressively increases with a vehicle's age until, at the end of its useful life, that may be virtually all that it does.

It seems this simple fact has escaped the person responsible for drafting this legislation. Hence my assertion that at least a third of all coaches could become eligible for the gas torch overnight. Ignoring the very real potential that what is proposed may ruin many operators at a stroke, I do seriously wonder whether there would be sufficient remaining capacity for essential pupil transport if this time-scale is not radically extended.

Should you not have seen the Draft Regulations, I urge you to get a copy today from the Department of

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Transport, Room C19/14, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB. Tel: 0171 276 6433 or fax 0171 276 6419.

There is not a moment to lose and your very livelihood may depend on it. The consultation period ends on 31 May. As well as responding to it (and I have only given you the highlights), you may well think it also worth writing to your MP.

There can be little doubt that seatbelts are coming and coming to us ahead of EU legislation. I am not recommending outright objection as that is probably futile. But if there is to be retro-fit at all, it must surely recognise the impossibility of fitment to vehicles well within their designed life yet which will increasingly be used to transport children as wear and tear combined with style obsolescence makes them unsuited to other work.

This legislation is a time-bomb which, perhaps unknown to its makers, has the capacity to decimate the coach industry.

Don't forget our survey

WITH the exception of depreciation funding, wages are the largest single-cost item in PSV operation. Drivers, of course, account for the lion's share.

I have, however, never advocated cutting wages to the bone, for it is people of quality we need holding our steering wheels, not those desperate enough to work for peanuts. Nevertheless, I am painfully aware that there are grave inconsistencies in the level of wages and other benefits which are paid by operators - even on a local level.

This can result in an undesirable amount of drivers switching between operators as they try to improve their take-home pay. It is probably in our own best interests, therefore, to be at least playing in the same ball park.

This Research File survey aims to assist that end. As usual, I urge all operators to spend just a few moments to complete and return the short, and anonymous, questionnaire on page 23. It is the volume of replies that gives us a useful picture to study and perhaps apply to our benefit. You have responded very well in the past. Please do so again.

There are many permutations of how drivers are paid. A question about a straight hourly rate would not be very revealing, as some operators will pay from start to finish of a duty, while others make deductions for breaks.

To get figures comparable on a like-for-like basis, I have asked you to show what a full-time driver would earn for the first 40 hours in a week. This may well not be the basis on which you would, in fact, pay drivers. It should not, however, be difficult to calculate. CBW

'I have never advocated cutting wages to the bone, for it is men of quality we need holding our steering wheels, not those desperate enough to work for peanuts'

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1983, Power door, 33 reclining seats grey/blue moquette, white exterior, MoT 26.04.95.

YNT PLAXTON SUPREME V

1982, 40 seats, courier seats, rear toilet, curtains, servery, TV/video, wheel discs, MoT 11.01.96.

YNV PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1985, 53 E type seats, air suspension, curtains, interior grey/maroon. Exterior all white. MoT 12.06.95. **choice of 2.**

DAF

SB 2300 DHTD 585 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1984, 53 fixed seats, power door, beige/red moquette, white exterior, MoT 20.02.96. **choice of 2.**

SB2300 DHTD 585 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1985, 53 fixed seats brown/orange moquette curtains, power door radio/Pa/cassette white, exterior. NEW MoT.

MB200 DKVL 600 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 III

1986, to be completely refurbished with 49 reclining seats and toilet, MoT 04.11.95.

MB 230 DKFL 615 CAETANO ALGARVEz

1988, 53 reclining seats plus courier seat, continental door red/maroon moquette power door, MoT 24.01.96.

SB2300 DUPLE 340

1988, 53 recliners and courier seat, 6SP 2F, Splitter gearbox, radio/Pa/ cassette. Centre O/S sunken toilet, centre O/S continental door. Water boiler, TV only, MoT, 12.04.95. **choice of 2.**

SB 2305 DH 585 CAETANO ALGARVE

1989, 53 reclining seats plus courier seat grey/red moquette seat belts curtains radio/pa/cassette power door. MoT. 16.05.95

TOYOTA

OPTIMO CAETANO

1988, Power door, radio, boot, curtains MoT. 23.02.96.

OPTIMO CAETANO

1990, 18 seater power door, boot radio curtains, MoT. 24.03.96.

MAN

(16290) JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE

1989, 6 speed ZF gearbox, 49 reclining seats, air conditioning, Double glazing, O/S/R floor mounted toilet, curtains, radio/PA cassette, painted all white. New MoT. 02.03.96.

LEYLAND

TIGER TACTL 11/30 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500

1983, 53 reclining seats, Hydracyclic gearbox, radio/pa/cassette, contiental door, curtains red/orange moquette white exterior, MoT 11.01.96.

TIGER L10 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1989, Cummins L10 290 engine, ZF 6 speed manual gearbox, Telma retarder, ferry lift, ABS, autolube, variable top speed limiter, inswinging front entrance door, half rear emergency door, ishringhausen drivers seat, 53 reclining seats, blue moquette, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation, double glazed, side blinds, rear curtains, radiomobile radio/Pa system, MoT. 07.02.95, **choice of 2.**

SCANIA

K122 PLAXTON 4000

72 reclining seats, courier seat, toilet, drinks. MoT 11.95.

ELITE K113 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500

1992, 7 speed manual GR801 comfort sheft gearbox, ABS, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, exhaust brake, kneel facility, ferry lift, autolube, electric retarder, Webasto heating, inswinging entrance door. Central continental door, centre toilet, half rear emergency door, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation, aircraft lockers, crew compartment, grey moquette, 49 reclining seats, centre gangway carpet, double glazed, side curtains, rear curtains, side blinds, aluminium wheels, Blaupunkt radio/Pa system, MoT. 09.09.95

VOLVO

B10MT PLAXTON 4000 RS

1989, Arm chair reclining seats, TV/Video Stero, toilet, double glazing, sun blinds, curtains, carpets, drinks, fridge, drivers bunk, crew seat. MoT. 25.02.86.

B10M MKIII VAN HOOL ALIZEE

1990, ZF 6 speed S690 manual gearbox, Telma Retarder, autolube, ferry lift, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter exhaust brake, webasto heating, plug front entrance door, centre continental door, half rear emergency door, centre toilet/servery, crew compartment, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation, ishringhausen drivers seat, courier seat, 49 reclining seats, brown moquette, double glazed, side blinds, rear curtains, radiomobile radio/Pa system. MoT. 01.10.95, **choice of 4.**

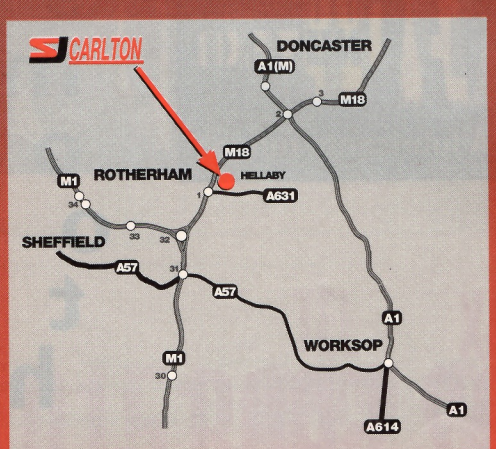
B10M-51 DUPLE 340

1985, To completely refurbished with 51 reclining seats and toilets, MoT 18.08.95.

VAN HOOL

T815 INTEGRAL

1991, Cummins L10 290 BHP engine, ZF HP 600 auto gearbox with integral reatarder, sutrak air conditioning, autolube, variable top speed limiter, road speed governor, kneel facility, ferry lift, Webasto heating, brown moquette, 53 reclining seats plus courier ishringhausen drivers seat, plug door, half rear emergency door, 2 roof air vents, double glazed, side blinds, rear curtains, radiomobile radio/Pa system, MoT. 16.01.96.



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Are enhanced rates paid, or paid time off given, if drivers work on Bank Holidays?	YES/NO	YES/NO
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Government should try consulting grass roots

From Anon

I read with interest 'Scarecrow's' comments (*CBW*, 4 March) on predatory duplicates. Like others I am keen to know exactly what the "reasonable grounds" as defined by the Public Service Vehicles (Registration of Local Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1994, are, and, should an operator complain to the traffic commissioner as to what he might consider "improper" use of duplicates, quite how the commissioner would determine such a complaint.

I ask myself what advice (if any) are bodies like the CPT giving to their members who have to interpret such matters? There have, I am certain, been instances since the new regulations took effect on 1 February 1995, where duplicates have been deployed.

No doubt the Government's intention was to stop the necessary harassment of smaller operators by the introduction of such a regulation. What is not clear, however, is exactly how staff at Traffic Area Offices will determine such cases.

If, as it appears from Scarecrow's letter, operators are not clear as to how they would prove behaviour was not predatory and the likelihood that TAOs would not be able to prove that it was, suggests that the legislation is useless. Perhaps in future Government would be advised to consult all parties at grass roots level before attempting to introduce ridiculous legislation!

Name and address supplied

Write to: The Editor
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EMAP Response Publishing
Wentworth House
Wentworth Street,
Peterborough, PE11DS
or fax 01733 62656

The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach and Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your full name (ie first name and surname) and address for our information.

Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

We totally agree

From Arthur Taylor

Our association, the Association of North Cheshire Minicoach Operators (ANCMO), would like to reply to the article about four Calderdale coach operators (CBW, 22 April).

We were not surprised to read the contents of the article as we sent a similar letter about this problem way back in September 1994 (*CBW*, 1 October 1994).

Our members applaud the operators' actions and would like them to know we are 100 per cent behind them and wish them every success. We are sure many, many other operators wish them the same.

With regard to the last paragraph of the articles we can concur with the remarks because our county council transport co-ordinators are doing precisely the same.

The county councils appear to utilise operators until it suits their purposes and then they proceed to take over existing contracts with no care or thought of the loyalty, good service and goodwill that the operators have given them and that the council's actions could actually put an operator and their employees out of business.

We would love to know how the councils do not make a profit when most minicoach operators could do the service cheaper than them.

All these problems we have already brought before our MPs but, there again, who cares? Nobody - as long as the county councils are making good profits which can be disguised in their operations.

Consequently they do not require PSVs or drivers. This also applies to Dial-a-Ride and Community Transport. We wonder if the county councils are planning on taking over the contracts done by private operators, similar to ourselves, then going plc and becoming millionaires overnight!

Arthur Taylor
Chairman
Association of North Cheshire
Minicoach Operators
Oxford
Warrington
Cheshire

Four appeal to Ombudsman over lost school contracts

FOUR Calderdale coach operators are making a stand against local councils running school contracts in house. They are in the first stage of calling for the local Government Ombudsman to intervene in a dispute over contracts for carrying children with learning difficulties.

Spokesman Neil Walsh of Halifax-based TJ Walsh Minibus [illegible] said the group had a [illegible] to [illegible] port section started operation of the services on 1 April and the group claims some vehicles and drivers will be hired in.

Mr Walsh said: "We don't believe we have been fairly treated. We all believe we have not been competing on a level playing field and everything has been weighted in favour of the council.

"We feel rather peeved by the way we have been treated. We have very qualified drivers [illegible] one of [illegible]

CBW's story on the Calderdale operators

Thanks for bubbly

From Trevor Brookes

You can probably imagine my surprise on Monday morning seeing Geoff Mills beating a path to my door bearing a Magnum of Champagne on your behalf.
Thus I learned that I'd won the draw on your stand at Brighton. Delighted I was! Many thanks, of course.

Keep up the good work with the magazine, it's essential reading to stay informed. When we do find another motor in classified, we'll have something with which to celebrate.

Trevor Brookes
Genial Travel
Colchester

Looking for screen

From P J Munday

Our company operates a mixed fleet of coaches, one of which is an Italian Padane on a Leyland Tiger Chassis. This vehicle, which was manufactured in 1982, unfortunately has had the windscreen broken and we are seeking information from anyone who may have or known the whereabouts of a screen or a mould for the screen. We understand the body design on this coach is the only one built on a Leyland Chassis, so obviously we are keen to keep this vehicle, which has proved reliable.

P J Munday
Director
Delta Coaches
Portrack
Stockton on Tees
Cleveland

Memo for HM Constabulary

REPORTS are coming in from Britain's motorways that coaches are being pulled on to the hard shoulder for using the outside lane.

The most recent case to reach the *CBW* news desk was that of a National Express service heading north on the M1.

It was an L-reg Expressliner II which had just passed Newport Pagnell services when a police patrol car signalled to the driver that he must stop on the hard shoulder. This alone is a dangerous manoeuvre on a busy motorway, but the coach driver was amazed to find that the alleged indiscretion was that his coach was over the required length and should not have used the outside lane.

Suitably reprimanded and handed a copy of the Highway Code, he then continued to proceed in a northerly direction.

While the police should be applauded for clamping down on all driving offences - including lane discipline - they should be reminded that the controversial outside lane ban does not come into effect until 1 January next year.

Indeed length is not an issue because the ban affects coaches over 7.5 tonnes (*CBW*, 4 February).

If the upholders of the law are confused, what chance has the law abiding operator?

Putting the boot in

WITH their club on the brink of relegation, officials at Aberdeen FC are clearly in no mood to be taken for a ride. In March, so-called supporters availed themselves of free coach trips to an away game in Glasgow, only to head straight for the shopping centre on arrival. But there was to be no repeat for the latest all-ticket away match in Edinburgh; the club's secretary Ian Taggart insisted any fans turning up at the coach without a ticket would be shown the red card.

Imaginations flying high at Lowland Omnibuses

THE acquisition of two high-spec Scania buses by Galashiels-based Lowland Omnibuses has, according to *The Scotsman* newspaper, come as meat and drink to the company's more fertile imaginations.

On the rest room information board, under the heading "Script for drivers of the new hi-tech Gala to Berwick bus service", was appended the following:

"At commencement of the trip (after good morning welcome): 'Our trip today will take ? hours ? minutes and we will be cruising at a height of five feet. Seatbelts are not fitted as we don't go fast enough."

Drivers are then asked to point out two emergency exits "where chutes will allow passengers to slide safely to earth", as well as the absence of oxygen masks "as we are not high enough to make any difference".

The script also comes with a warning for the benefit of passengers: "The driver's compartment is a model of ergonomic design and very comfortable. As a result it is possible that your driver's attention may wander. Should this happen the sign 'Driver Nodding Off' will be illuminated. Would the nearest passenger get up and give the driver's left shoulder a shake? Please be gentle with older drivers as the shock of sudden reawakening may be dangerous." CBW

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Bodied by Salvador Caetano in Portugal from Duple Metsec kits, the Dragon is a giant among local service buses

PART built in Guildford and part built in Gaia, Portugal, the first Dragons for Hong Kong Citybus are big in size and inspirational in scale. *CBW* took one of these Dennis-chassied buses on a test which challenged the imagination of local residents. Our five-hour circuit took this giant of a bus from bus station through several choice housing estates, towards the Hogs Back and along the A3 at a steady 45mph. We met predictable challenges - low bridges, mini-roundabouts, narrow traffic lanes and congested pedestrian precincts.

This environment may be a shadow of the Dragon's adopted territory in the Crown Colony where high-capacity and heavy traffic present man and machine with a daily test of endurance. But the selected route ably challenged its abilities and raised the question of the suitability of putting a 12-metre double decker in UK service.

Entry to high-quality air-con transport

It is size that makes this Dragon stand out from the crowd. As a giant among local service buses it was sure to make an impact as it cruised in and out of the Guildford bus lanes.

Passengers at bus stops stood back in amazement. This bright yellow beast could be seen approaching from a distance. As it neared, the effect was to block out all available natural light. Where there was once the sun, now stood this vast expanse of metal and glass.

However, the most remarkable reaction was the delayed response of other drivers. Mothers with Metros and Minis full of children were being lured where they normally fear to tread by the apparent placid nature of the beast under our control.

Perhaps reassured by fairy-tale stories of friendly giants, car drivers were tucking in under its wings in some very unwise situations.

Yet there is nothing remarkable about this size of decker. Twelve-metre coaches have been common on British roads for more than a decade and single-deck citybuses of this length are becoming the norm. So why was the Dragon treated so differently?

We can look to our subconscious for an explanation. See the back of a double-deck bus and you think of ponderous progress, two axles and a length of around nine metres. Drivers know how to react. But when the Dragon moved it was long... much longer than expected.

BACKGROUND

This particular Dragon may have confused the good citizens of Guildford, but it is also likely to confuse the more informed members of the bus industry.

Within its steel and aluminium shell are some worthy trivia questions. Who built the bodywork? How many passengers does it seat? What engine is fitted? Which gearbox? Is it really a beast to drive?

The test vehicle was the last of 30 three-axle, two-door Dragons for Hong Kong Citybus. An earlier order called for 20 similar buses, built on shorter 10.3-metre chassis with single-door bodywork.

It is powered by 250bhp Cummins L10 engine driving through three-speed Voith gearboxes and has high-specification bodywork by Duple Metsec, a sister company of Guildford-based Dennis within the Trinity Holdings group.

The 98-seat body is supplied in kit from by Duple Metsec. Normally this body is assembled at the destination, but Hong Kong Citybus required delivery of its buses completely built up, so the Dragon chassis and the body kits were shipped to Portugal where they were assembled

The year of the Dragon

Hong Kong Citybus has taken its first Dennis Dragons. Mike Morgan puts one of these 12-metre deckers to a UK test in the comparative quiet of Guildford

by Salvador Caetano.

"It may seem an unusual move," said Roger Heard, Dennis bus sales director, "but Caetano had the expertise, the quality in assembly and finishing, and the capacity to take on this job."

Hong Kong Citybus is committed to high quality standards and all 50 buses have Nippondenso air-conditioning, tinted glazing and Lazzerini seats. The use of two-and-two seating on both decks is a break with tradition. In the past Hong Kong buses have traditionally had two-and-three seating in the upper deck to maximise carrying capacity.

DELIVERY

The test Dragon was a long way from entering service but had already clocked-up a few hundred miles before being shipped out from Sheerness for the 28-day journey to the Far East.

From the Guildford plant the bare chassis went by ship to Vigo in Spain, while the containerised body kits take the same route.

Once on Spanish soil they are driven across country to Gaia where body meets chassis with the assistance of the Caetano workforce. Instead of taking a direct route to Hong Kong, the completed Dragon returned to the UK via the same route

Dennis bus export sales manager, Paul Offer, says this logistical nightmare is the most cost-effective solution for a vehicle 12 metres long, 2.5 metres wide, 4.374 metres high and weighing 14,382 kg.

But Dennis, celebrating its centenary this year, is well practised at finding solutions to supplying the bus-hungry Far East. Around 250 buses have been sent to Hong Kong over the last 12 months and it has orders in excess of 125 in the pipeline.

First deckers went to Hong Kong in 1976. Almost 400 of these front-engined Jubilees with Gardner/Voith driveline were supplied - the majority to Kowloon Motor Bus. Subsequently the rear-engined Dragon took its place so effectively that Mr Offer says one million people ride on a Dennis every day in Hong Kong.

Although unknown in the UK, the Dragon is an export success with a design firmly based on British practice. The 2,000th chassis went down the line last year and, in addition to the Citybus vehicles, 45 10-metre chassis are in build for KMB with another 70 to follow, Stagecoach Kenya is taking 11-metre Gardner-engined bused in two batches of 10, and two are on order for Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminal staff transport.

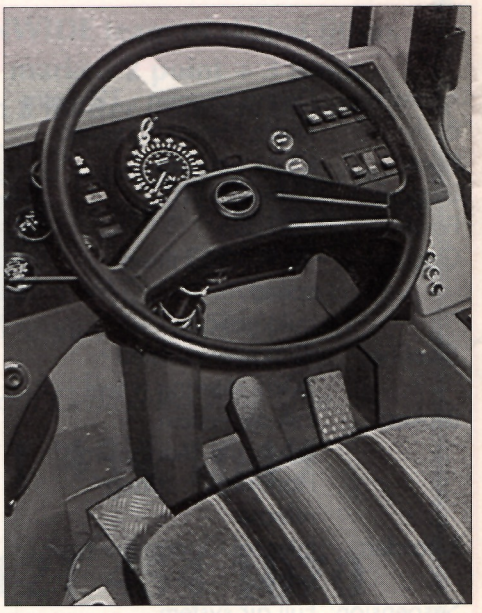
Most of the options facing operators contemplating life with the Dragon have already been alluded to - chassis length from 10 metres to 12 metres; choice of Gardner or Cummins engine; transmission; etc, etc.

Here we have a strong hint of its appeal. Dennis's Roger Heard says Hong Kong is a specific market not suited to a compromise position. "Prices are competitive in Hong Kong against the Japanese and our products suit the operation."

Although Dennis is actively working on a Lance-derived double-deck chassis for the UK market, and low-floor is food for thought for the future, Hong Kong is a developing market suited to the heavyweight strengths of the Dragon.

FOR PASSENGER AND DRIVER

Apart from the startling Citybus yellow livery there is more to the Caetano-completed Metsec body than discreet badging. It is a package



Small wheel - big bus

which lifts the humble Hong Kong people mover on to a high level of quality air-conditioned transport, with a surprising amount of attention given to comfort.

You would be forgiven for expecting limited legroom and wide gangways as the operator seeks maximum capacity. True, this is a 133-passenger machine with two doors for fast-flow loading and unloading, but the seat pitch and comfort in the Lazzerini seats is better than that in the average UK bus built to carry many fewer fare-paying customers.

Downstairs, there are a large number of side-facing seats over the wheelboxes - 23 in total - but, even with these, elbow room is generous.

This is not a bus for a third-class transport system, it is transport for everyone.

Economies of scale in bus operation

Ride quality confirms the vehicle's solid build and does nothing to lend credibility to the belief that kit-built bodies are inferior. On most roads it rides over surface irregularities with dignity. But there is no soft underside to this particular Dragon and large potholes do send some judder through the steering .

Citybus has insisted that the 18-inch Dart-sized steering wheel is fitted. This makes for a comfortable driving position and effectively makes the cab feel bigger. However, it does make the steering heavy and, without an adjustable column, will not suit every driver.

Braking was excellent, very precise and confidence inspiring in all applications - particularly when approaching bus stops where an accurate stop is essential.

Manoeuvrability is inevitably an issue with such a large machine. Although clearly not designed for housing developments with narrow twisting roads and parked cars, the Dragon, nevertheless, showed itself to be an easy beast to position accurately. Mirrors sensibly sighted helped and visibility through the large flat windscreen is very good.

The long wheelbase - almost six metres - together with the two rear axles, are the most significant restraint. Mini-roundabouts become a joke and sharp left turns in town centres require a lot of road space.

For the driver it is a bus made easy to drive with automatic gearchange and predictable - if lethargic - performance.

Top speed is a sedate 45mph and acceleration timing needs a lot of patience.

Where the average high-powered coach can do 0-30mph in around 10 secs and 0-50 in 25 secs, the Dragon ambles along at half that rate and never manages to reach the magic five-0, even with the help of following wind and a steep hill.

However, it is a Dragon for a particular course.

Initial acceleration is graceful and the three-speed gearchange shifts between ratios at around 20mph and 30mph depending on the load. In an urban environment it is unlikely to move up from second with great frequency.

Up and down shifts are very smooth but the change of engine note makes them clearly identifiable in a passenger saloon where noise levels are highest at the front.

VERDICT

Adding refinement to a conventional double-deck service bus does work. Passengers in Guildford, Hong Kong or Peterborough are all worthy of improved standards through better seating and air-conditioning.

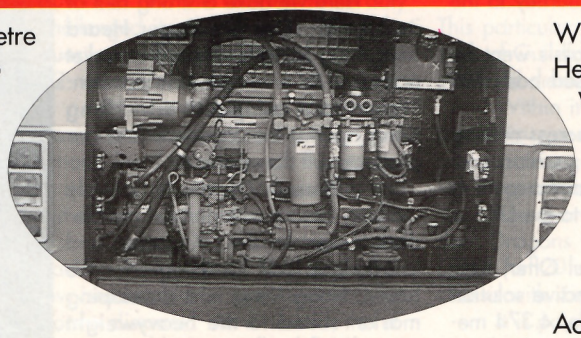
Yet there is an inevitable cost implication that is difficult to reconcile on a small vehicle. However, spread the extra over 133 customers and the package starts to look more cost effective. It's a good example of economy of scale in operation.

But large scale brings its problems in the UK operating environment. There is no pretending that such a large vehicle is as nimble as a Dart or as lively as a Lance.

Where the operating conditions dictate that it makes sense to move large numbers of people efficiently and in comfort, you really do have the course for the Dragon. CBW

SPECIFICATION

Chassis:	Dennis Dragon - 12-metre
Body:	Duple Metsec/Caetano
Price:	£174,140 fob
Engine:	Cummins L10
Power:	250 bhp
Gearbox:	Voith D863 three-speed automatic
Steering:	ZF power assisted - 50cm steering wheel
Brakes:	Full air system Front and rear: drums Handbrake: spring release
Retarder:	Integral Operation: Foot brake
Suspension:	Full air system



Front axle:	GKN S82 beam
Drive axle:	GKN D66 - 5.3:1 ratio
Tyres:	Michelin 295/80R x 22.5

DIMENSIONS

Length:	12 metres
Width:	2.5 metres
Height:	4.374 metres
Wheelbase:	5.967 metres
Unladen weight:	14,382 kg
GVW:	23,500 kg

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration:	0-30 mph - 20 secs 0-45 mph - 55 secs
Fuel economy:	Not measured
Lower saloon noise levels at 45 mph:	Front - 76 dB(A), Middle - 73 dB(A) Rear - 74 dB(A)

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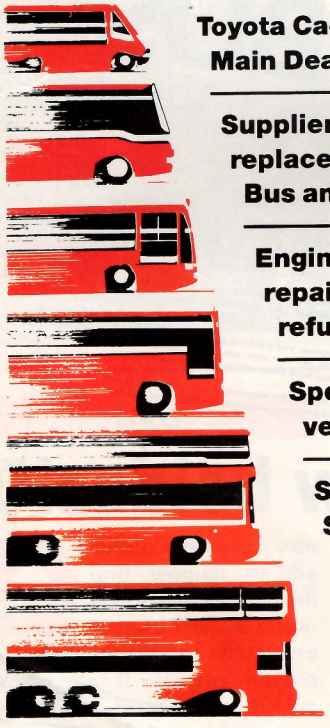

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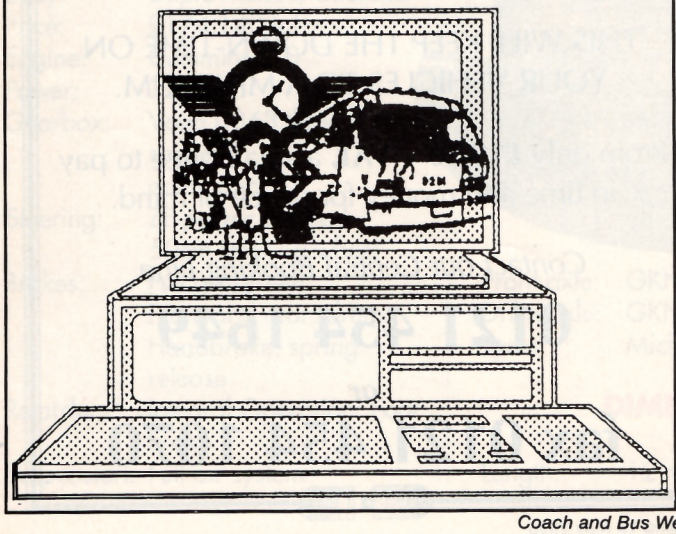

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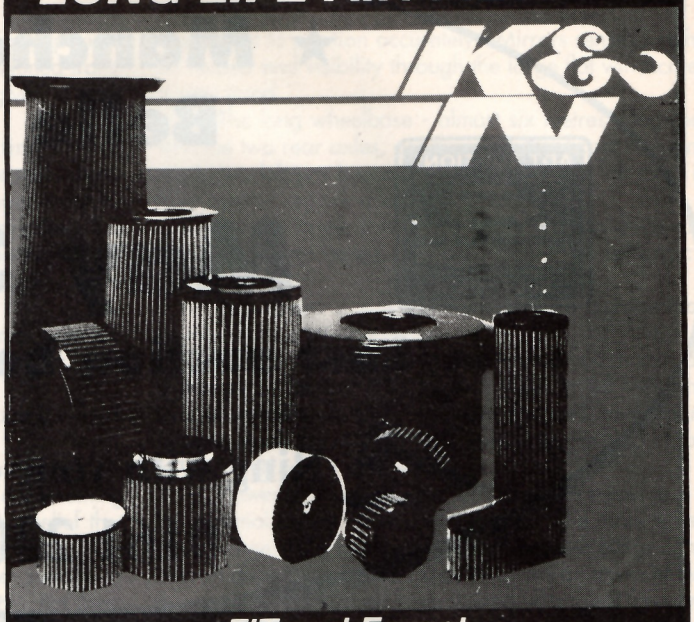

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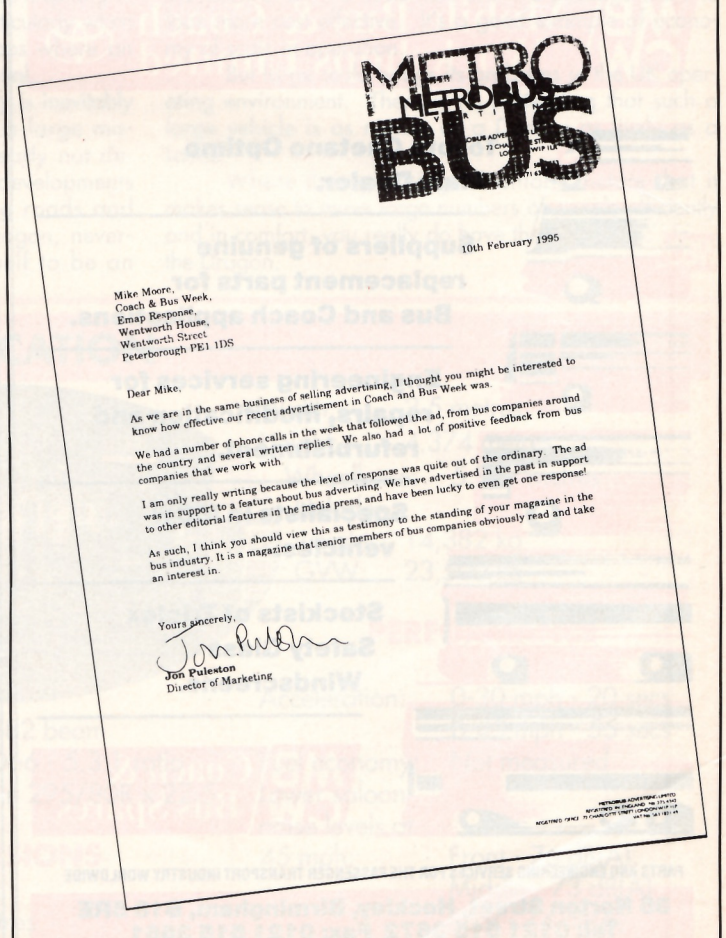


METRO METROBUS BUS

10th February 1995

Mike Moore,
Coach & Bus Week,
Emap Response,
Wentworth House,
Wentworth Street,
Peterborough PE1 1DS

Dear Mike,

As we are in the same business of selling advertising, I thought you might be interested to know how effective our recent advertisement in Coach and Bus Week was.

We had a number of phone calls in the week that followed the ad, from bus companies around the country and several written replies. We also had a lot of positive feedback from bus companies that we work with.

I am only really writing because the level of response was quite out of the ordinary. The ad was in support to a feature about bus advertising. We have advertised in the past in support to other editorial features in the media press, and have been lucky to even get one response!

As such, I think you should view this as testimony to the standing of your magazine in the bus industry. It is a magazine that senior members of bus companies obviously read and take an interest in.

Yours sincerely,

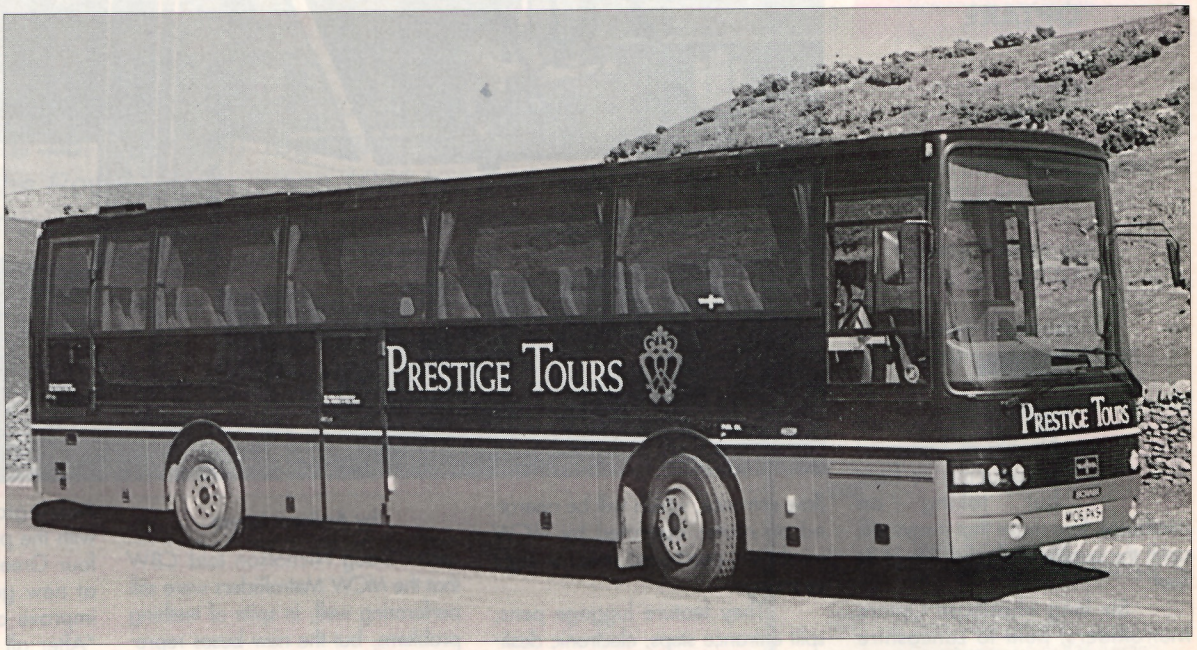
Jon Pulston

Jon Pulston
Director of Marketing

SCANIA

Lowland's Prestige work

Another K113 CRB delivered for duties with Glasgow operation



by Mark Williams

LOWLAND Omnibuses has received a further Scania Kl13 CRB for the work it carries out for Glasgow-based operator, Prestige Tours.

The 49-seat Van Hool-bodied coach joins five other Scanias in the Lowland fleet and this Summer three of the Lowland Scanias will operate in the distinctive Prestige green livery designed by Ray Stenning. A fourth vehicle, which will be operated by Lowland for Prestige, is a vintage AEC Reliance with Harrington Grenadier bodywork, which will provide a unique three-day sightseeing service between Edinburgh and London.

MOSELEY

All-black Van Hool

PARRYS International has taken delivery of the all-black Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M for Irish tours (*CBW*, 22 April). Christened *City of Dublin*, and supplied by Moseley, the 48-seat coach is Parrys' first Volvo since 1988.

Specification, including air-conditioning and inertia reel lap belts on all passenger seats, matches the eight Neoplan Cityliners in Parrys' fleet. It has off-side centre sunken washroom with chemical toilet and manual Continental door; 60-litre fridge; five-litre water boiler; and video with three colour monitors.

UVG

Disabled will benefit

DISABLED ex-service men and women at the Princess Louise Scottish Hospital (Erskine Hospital), the majority of whom are World War II veterans, have a brand new wheelchair coach from specialist manufacturer, UVG.

UVG general sales manager, Mike Harfield (left), handed over the Dennis Javelin-chassied Vanguard III to Mrs Maureen Lundie, matron, and Lieutenant Colonel Steele, Princess Louise assistant commandant (see picture).

Vanguard III is designed primarily for local coaching and inter-urban work, but has been adapted to take 38 seated passengers or up to 16 wheelchairs. It has seatbelts throughout and its special features include an underfloor wheelchair lift, removable seats and hot drinks machine. CBW

Blackburn goes for minis

OPTARE

Municipal's move will boost quality and reliability

by Andrew Jarosz

MUNICIPALLY-owned Blackburn Transport is reducing its fleet but taking on minibuses, in a move that it says will uplift the quality and reliability of its fleet.

Six long-wheelbase Optare MetroRiders, built to Lancashire County tendered specification, have been bought. Four are 31-seaters and two are 29-seaters with a fas-flow entrance, which will be operated on routes operated by MCW minibuses, purchased seven or eight years ago.

They feature luggage pens, split entrance steps, electronic destination equipment and a hinged rear emergency window, to Blackburn's specifications. Operations director Doug Nicholson told *CBW* that the MCW MetroRiders were still performing well, in spite of teething problems, but the new buses represented a significant leap forward in engineering quality.

"We have upgraded our Accrington to Darwen corridor with the purchase of an additional four Greenways, and are looking at new generation minibuses to improve our standards." he said. "After all the changes have been completed, we will be taking a number of double deckers out of service."

BERKHOF

Why Clapton bought itself a new MAN

A DEPARTURE for Clapton Coaches of Midsomer Norton, Bath is the purchase of a Berkhof Excellence 1000 midi on MAN 11.190 chassis.

The well-equipped coach has Sutrak air-conditioning, 33 Vogel reclining seats with seat belts, toilet, Continental door, Jason hot water boiler, double glazing and video/radio/tape/PA together with a deaf-loop to aid sound reception for passengers with hearing difficulties.

It will be used primarily on Clapton Coaches' own holiday programme as well as other specialised work and is finished in white/turquoise/blue livery.

MARSHALL

Bluebird buys Ivecos

LATEST deliveries for Bluebird of Manchester are six Marshall-bodied Iveco 59-12s.

The vehicles will be used on services 185 and 187 which link Manchester's City Centre and railway stations with the outlying districts of Clayton and Newton Heath. They are built to 1997 DPTAC specification with two-plus-one seating.

Bluebird, run by chairman Tom Dunstan (left) and general manager Mike Dunstan (right), has been operating local bus services in north Manchester since 1988 and the fleet has grown to 33 with an annual turnover of £1.5 million. The total number of Ivecos bought since 1989 is now 16 with two more ordered for delivery in September. CBW

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A to Z DIRECTORY

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1991 VOLVO B10M IKARUS BLUE DANUBE 358, 49 recliners, centre continental door, double glazing, curtains, large luggage capacity, interior fawn/orange, exterior red/grey. MoT 12/2/96. Choice of 3.
1989 (G) VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 51 recliners, crew seat, rear sunken toilet, inswung entrance door, radio/tape, wired for video, interior fawn/brown, exterior light green/yellow/brown. MoT 14/3/96.
1989 SCANIA K112 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 4000, 67 recliners, 2 crew seats, toilet, large fridge, Webasto, retarder, double glazed, radio/tape/PA, 4 tables, interior fawn, exterior white/red/yellow. MoT 8/1/96.
1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 reclining seats, crew seat, centre sunken toilet, side window blinds, aircraft style rack locker doors. Interior fawn/brown, exterior white, no signwriting. MoT 29/3/96.
1988 (E) DAF MB230 DFKL CAETANO ALGARVE, 51 recliners, sunken toilet, rear continental door, crew seat, power door, Peage window, radio/tape, drinks machine, tinted windows, ferry lift and kneeling suspension, wired for video. Interior grey/red, exterior white unsignwritten. MoT 15/5/95.
1986 MERCEDES 0303 RHD, 49 recliners, crew seat, centre continental door, sunken toilet, Webasto, fridge, hot water boiler, side window blinds, radio/tape and wired for video, driver's bunk, Voith retarder. Interior grey, exterior white/blue/turquoise. MoT 11/2/96.
1995 LEYLAND TIGER 245 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 46 recliners, saloon toilet, rear servery. Interior fawn/brown, exterior red/grey. MoT 12/1/96.
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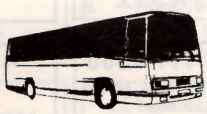

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(56005/VU5)

1987 (D)
FREIGHT ROVER DIESEL
16 seater + driver, hi-back seats, MoT'd March '96, good condition throughout
£3,200 ono + VAT
Tel. 01889 578620
(56060/VU5)

1985/86 FORD TRANSIT
2.5 diesel, 16 seats, 5 standees, p/door, various MoT dates.
Choice of 6 £2,700 each
Regal Coach Sales
Tel: 0141 776 3268
(55971/VU5)

1987 DODGE
23 seat, Beaver body, 6 cylinder engine, new MoT
£4,000 + VAT ono
Tel. 01493 441036
(56008/VU5)

1982 MERCEDES 307
12 high back seats, new respray – all white, reconditioned engine, PSV, ticket til Nov '95.
£2,750 + VAT ono
Tel: 01530 260933
(56002/VU5)

1982 FIAT BEJA
18 seater, will test.
£3,500
Tel. 01234 352547 or 359763
(55968/VU5)

1988 FREIGHT ROVER
16 seater, will test.
£3,500
Tel. 01234 352547 or 359763
(55967/VU5)

FORD VAN HOOL (PP)
Engine and upholstery recently reconditioned, good condition overall, MoT recently expired.
£2,350 ono
Tel. 0121 433 4311
(56069/VU5)

BEDFORD 500 DUPLE '76
Tested Jan '96, 53 seats, VGC
£2,800 No VAT
01482 707365
(55999/VU5)

V REG FORD VAN HOOL ARAGON
Telma, 53 seats, tested July '95, ready to work, ideal for schools
£3,500 ono + VAT
Tel. Tracks 01797 344343
(55990/VU5)

1979 BEDFORD PLAXTON
53 seat, 10 months test, very good condition, will come with spare engine, gearbox and rear axle, also with full set of glass.
£3,700 + VAT
John Allan Coaches
Tel: 01254 389449
(55953/VU5)

1980 BEDFORD YMT 500
Plaxton Supreme IV, 53 seats, Telma, tested July '95, ready to work now.
£3,900 ono + VAT
Tel 01797 344343
(55988VU5)

1975 PJK PLAXTON
29 seats, MoT July '95
£1,500 + VAT
Tel:- 01375 676578
(56000/VU5)

1982 MERCEDES 508
12 seater, removable seats, plus tail lift, owned from new.
£4,000 plus VAT
Tel 01246 476366
or 0831 483784
(55974/VU5)

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Petrol, 8 seats plus 2 wheelchairs, Ratcliff lift, good condition.
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Tel 01406 362518 Anytime
(55987/VU5)

FORD REBUR
17 coach seats, diesel overdrive, power door, MoT Feb '96, valuable reg number
£1,800 + VAT ono
p/x considered either way
Tel: 01767 683333
(55993/VU5)

1980 FORD PLAXTON
Very good condition, full year MoT.
Offers £4,250
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(55960/VU5)

TRANSIT Di DORMOBILE
16 seat service bus, painted all white, MoT 12/95, unused since test, part exchange considered.
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With overdrive gearbox, Y Reg, 11 months test.
£1,100 no VAT, ono
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(55871/VU5)

1985 TALBOT EXPRESS
16 passenger seater, some slight body repairs needed, MoT til December 1995.
£2,000 ono + VAT
Tel: 01202 432 690
(55972/VU5)

FORD TRANSIT
16 seater, diesel, high back Moquette seats, recon engine, Eberspacher heater, tested, good condition
£1,500 + VAT
TEL 01622 813044
(55975/VU5)

FORD
16 seater, recon diesel engine, overdrive, 'V' reg (spares or repair)
£550 ono
0181-399 0658 (Surrey)
(55978/VU5)

1986 FREIGHT ROVER
16 seater, tested to September '95
£3,500
Tel. 01234 352547 or 359763
(55969/VU5)

FREIGHT ROVER
16 seats, standees, D reg, POD, diesel, white, unwritten, MoT June '95, VGC throughout.
£3,250 + VAT
Tel: 01494 713080
(55604/VU5)

1989 G FORD TRANSIT
14 seater, twin wheeler.
£5,000 + VAT ono
Public Service Vehicle
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(Wellfield)
(55951/VU5)

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Plaxton Supreme III, 49 seats, tested July '95, ready to work now, all white.
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(55989/VU5)

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(55594/VU5)

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15 seater, tested May '96, major engine overhaul completed
£4,950 + VAT
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(Cheshire) (56075/VU5)

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1975 (P), 29 seats, MoT to Jan '96, recent respray, good clean reliable coach
£1,500 + VAT
Tel: 01443 436 256
01443 423 797
(55956/VU5)

11 METRE FORD PLAXTON
53 seats, requires attention, good reliable vehicle
£2,750 + VAT
Tel: 01986 895375
(55595/VU5)

DMS
1974, single door, new ticket
£4,250 + VAT
Tel:
01923 222151/225412
(55782/VU5)

DODGE S56s
Alexander, 23/25 seats, choice of four, long tests
£3,750 each
Tel: 0151 726 8894
(56009/VU5)

1987 RENAULT DODGE S56
East Lancs body, power door, 22 high back seats, destination gear, 12 months MoT.
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(Devon)
(55958/VU5)

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29 seater, 1975, tested until Nov 95, stereo, PA system, very good working order throughout, 7ft 6ins wide.
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(55786/VU5)

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East Lancs, 76 seats, just out of test, Gardner engine, spares or repair.
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(55774/VU5)

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19 seater coach, white, unwritten, clean and reliable, MoT June '95.
£3,250
Tel. 01703 472150
(Southampton)
(55746/VU5)

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1976 FORD DUPLE FOR SALE
12 month MoT, taxed till May, new parts recently fitted
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(56024/VU5)

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53 seater, very clean and tidy, new MoT, radio and PA.
£2,995 + VAT
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(56021/VU5)

MERCEDES 307D
Minibus, 1981, tested October, high back seats, high roof, good condition for year
£1,200 (no VAT)
p/x considered
Tel: 01325 300604
(55930/VU5)

FREIGHT ROVER
Dormobile, 1987, 16 seater
£2,600 + VAT
Tel: 01925 415299
(55902/VU5)

DAIMLER FLEETLINE
1976, new MoT
£3,500 + VAT ono
Tel: 0115 9422358
(55895/VU5)

MERCEDES 508
1982 Y Reg, 19 high back seats, luggage racks and boot, COIF, Dec test, used by health authority, direct from them, excellent condition for year
£3,900 ono + VAT
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(55692/VU5)

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1977, 45 seat coach
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T reg, 26 seat, MoT til May '95.
£2,500 ono
or will exchange for 20 seater
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(55748/VU5)

LEYLAND 680 DOMI I
Semi-auto, 49 seats, Ratcliffe side lift, good all round, MoT August
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or 0860 899026 (Mobile)
(55910/VU5)

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anytime (55833/VU5)

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Semi Automatic, 1975, Duple service bus, 53 seats, tested 25th April '96, good engine and gearbox
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(56023/VU5)

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MkII body, 20 seats, excellent condition.
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(Sheffield) (55852/VU5)

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(55691/VU5)

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1986 (D) 2.5 DIESEL
20 seat, Carlyle body, tested November '95.
£2,650 ono with no VAT
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Mobile: 0374 760945
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45 seats, 7 tables, power door, radio/tape, wired for video, reconditioned engine fitted Dec '94, MoT Dec '95, excellent condition.
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Nov '87, E Reg, 8 seater, diesel, good condition, MoT Oct '95
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BEDFORD DUPLE 53
1976, MoT Nov, 500 engine.
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(after 6pm) (56016/VU5)

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1988, 8 seater, petrol minibus, good condition, MoT July '95, inc lap belts
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1981, 53 seats, MoT 24/7/95
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EXAMPLE

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To take advantage of this superb offer
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Are you a subscriber to ***Coach and Bus week*** *yes* ☐ *no* ☐
Your Name: .....
.....
Company Name: .....
Address: .....
.....
.....
.....Post code:.....
Tel:.....Fax:.....
Please use the boxes below for your advertisement. Only one word per box.

Send to: Chrissie Hester Classified Department, Coach and Bus Week, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS.

Sell your vehicles!

OPTION 1

Lineage - £1 per word + vat per insertion
NOW ONLY 50p per word + vat.
(eqv. £12.50 + vat per week).

DAF

DAF MB200, 12m Plaxton, v clean and tidy, 53 reclinners tinted windows, use tours and private, well maint. MOT.

EXAMPLE

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PARAMOUNT 3200
LOW DRIVER

55 recliners, double glazed, soft trim, can be tested to 95. Excellent condition.

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EXAMPLE

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Minimum of 25 words

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Company Name: .....

Address: .....

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Box No. £8.00 per week extra

Make cheques payable to EMAP Response Publishing Ltd,

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OR FREEPHONE 0800 581885 ***Mondays or Tuesdays***

A Name to Maintain

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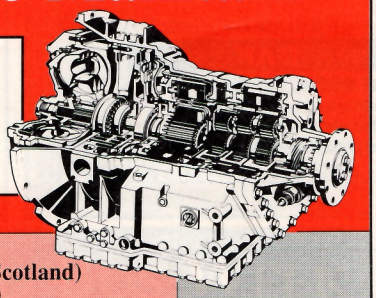

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Great Yarmouth, tel: 01493 441383

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Established owner/driver needs desperately contract hire executive single or double decker coach. Willing to take over lease of surplus vehicle – references.

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Wentworth House,
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Expanding Northern based coach operation wishes to acquire a coach operation based in Mid or South Glamorgan

All replies considered in strictest confidence

Size of company immaterial

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(56128/UN/BOP)

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By advertising in **Coach and Bus Week** you will:

- ★ **Put** your tender in front of over 6,700 senior management/directors in the industry.
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'We currently use Coach and Bus Week for our Tender advertising and are very pleased with the results we receive!'

Alison Roberts
Marketing Executive
London Transport

COACH AND BUS WEEK – THE ONLY CHOICE FOR TENDERS

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Selling a coach or bus? It's so easy

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Simply quote your credit card number or Switch number
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Appointments & Tenders

Tel: 01733 898111 Fax: 01733 62656

OPERATIONS MANAGER REQUIRED

On Herts and Essex border, close to Stansted Airport, to work with new general manager.

Applications in writing only to:
Box No 56130
Coach and Bus Week
EMAP Response, Wentworth House,
Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS

All correspondence will be dealt with in strictest confidence. (56130/APP)

Appointments & Tenders

Tel: 01733 898111 Fax: 01733 62656

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at our Aberhill (Methil) Depot. Reporting directly to the Engineering Director, you will play a critical role in maintaining the high standards of a Stagecoach operation. With responsibility for some 58 vehicles, it is an excellent chance to develop your career within a progressive company.

ABOUT THE POST

As a Depot Engineer you will need to ensure that the highest standards of engineering are maintained. In addition, you will be responsible for the premises, depot stores and health and safety.

THE QUALITIES WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

The successful applicant must be self-motivated with proven experience in managing a fleet of public service vehicles to a consistent high standard of presentation and reliability within strict budgetary controls, and demonstrate effective leadership and motivational skills as well as flexible attitude to working hours.

TO APPLY: in writing to:
Mr. S. Brydon, Engineering Director, Fife Scottish Omnibuses Ltd., Esplanade, KIRKCALDY, Fife KY1 1SP with full details of your career to date.

Closing date for applications – 26th May 1995.

(56147/APP)

SPEEDLINK
AIRPORT SERVICES

SPEEDLINK · JETLINK · FLIGHTLINE

FLEET ENGINEER

Speedlink Airport Services are seeking an experienced Engineer to manage a fleet of 60 coaches based at two operating depots at Gatwick and Heathrow Airports, with additional responsibilities for 35 vehicles operated for Heathrow Airport Ltd.

Candidates must have proven and extensive skills in the management of a very high specification and high mileage coach fleet. They must have a proven track record in dealing with quality control and preferably to be a member of a recognised institute or registered as a I.Eng or Eng Tech with the Engineering Council.

An excellent remuneration package will be offered including a fully financed company car.

Applications together with a full CV should be sent in writing to:

Mr N Gray
Managing Director
Speedlink Airport Services Ltd
106/7 Ashdown House, Gatwick Airport,
West Sussex RH6 0JH

by no later than 26th May 1995. (56129/APP)

Appointments & Tenders

Fax: 01733 62656

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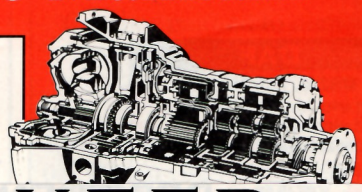

ENGINEER

COMPETITIVE SALARY & BENEFITS PACKAGE

VACANCY

East Yorkshire Motor Services Limited, a subsidiary of EYMS Group, is the leading bus and coach company in North Humberside and the Scarborough area.

As part of a recent management restructuring exercise the company presently has a vacancy within its engineering department for a Technical Engineer. This post is likely to suit someone with a view to progressing a career in engineering management.

The Technical Engineer will be involved in practical engineering projects throughout the company as well as individual projects, both on mechanical engineering and property development matters, on behalf of EYMS Group subsidiary companies.

Reporting directly to the Chief Engineer, the successful applicant will be required to demonstrate a high degree of self-motivation and a commitment to overall quality improvement in terms of technical advice on engineering maintenance and other engineering activities.

Salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience but will not be less than £14,000. Benefits will include contributory pension scheme and sick-pay scheme.

Applicants should provide a full CV, including details of present position and salary, and this should be sent under 'Personal' cover, to arrive by 25 May 1995 to:

Gordon Jones, Chief Engineer,
East Yorkshire Motor Services Ltd.,
252 Anlaby Road, Hull HU3 2RS.

EAST YORKSHIRE

AN EYMS GROUP COMPANY

East Yorkshire Motor Services Limited

(56137/APP)

RE-ADVERTISEMENT

BUS AND COACH TRAINING LIMITED

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISER

£17,500 + Car + Benefits

BCT, the Industry Training Organisation for the Bus and Coach Industry, is seeking an individual to actively support and advise companies on training and development needs. You will need to demonstrate broad experience in the bus and coach industry and possess excellent presentation and communication skills.

Closing date for applications: 26 May 1995

For further information contact:

Quality and Systems Manager
BCT Limited
Regency House
43 High Street
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1ET
Telephone no: 01923 896607

BCT

PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE

BCT Ltd is a subsidiary of the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK

(56125/APP)

London Borough of Barnet

DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

TERM CONTRACTS FOR THE PROVISION OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT RELATED SERVICES

Applications are invited from suitably experienced firms with adequate resources who wish to be considered for the following contracts:

1. **Coaches with drivers - 21 to 72 seaters** **Reference 3218**
2. **Passenger Escorts/Carers** **Reference 3219**

All Contracts are for twelve months with an anticipated start date of September 1995. The above contracts are for the transportation of both adults and children, many of whom have learning difficulties, to and from the Council's day care centres, schools and other establishments.

Applications must quote the appropriate reference(s), together with the name of the contract (s). All applications, which should be received no later than Friday 26 May 1995, must be made in writing, addressed:

Attn Mr P Evans, Senior Buyer, Contracts Unit
Mill Hill Depot
Bittacy Hill
London NW7 1BL

Applications must include the following details:

a) Examples of similar work undertaken with number of vehicles involved, together with names and addresses of at least two technical referees.

b) A copy of the most recent audited accounts, which should not be earlier than 1 April 1994.

c) Name and address of banker(s) to whom reference may be made.

Applicants should note that, dependent upon response and suitability for inclusion, a selection may be made in order to compile a list of tenderers. The Council anticipates a tender list of not more than eight tenderers for each type of contract. **The Council reserves the right to reject any application without further justification.**
If you require any further information, please contact Max Booth, tel: 0181 359 5116, who will be pleased to assist.
Please note that applications from tenderers who do not supply all of the information requested above will not be considered. This stipulation also applies to contractors currently engaged in this work on behalf of the Council.

(56132/APP)

North Western

ENGINEERING MANAGER

North Western Road Car Company Limited, a subsidiary of British Bus plc, operating in excess of 550 vehicles throughout Merseyside and Greater Manchester are seeking an Engineering Manager.

The successful applicant will be a time served Craftsman, fully conversant with the efficient maintenance and repair of buses/coaches, DTp standards and able to operate effectively within agreed cost budgets. Will be responsible for the complete Engineering and Procurement functions including effective man-management of the Engineering workforce and premises.
Salary circa £16,000.

Applications in writing together with a full CV should be sent to:

Mr. G. S. Raven
Engineering Director (Acting)
North Western Road Car Company
73 Ormskirk Road, Aintree, Liverpool L9 5AE

by no later than Friday 19th May 1995

(56124/A/APP)

▼ Bus

Smith goes Down Under

MIKE Smith, the operations manager at Transit Holdings' Red and Blue Admiral operation on the south coast, has gone out to Australia to assist in the set-up of the Transit Holdings operation in Rockhampton (*CBW*, 29 April).

Mr Smith joined Red & Blue Admiral from Southampton Citybus in 1991 and played a key role in setting up the operation. He became revenue protection officer before moving to quality manager. He was promoted to operations manager in 1994.

Admiral general manager Mick Ramsey said: "I think it's a feather in his cap that his experience and knowledge have been recognised. I know he will do a first-class job. He will be missed at Portsmouth and we'll be glad to see his return."

▼ Coach and Bus

Grampian takes training award

by Mike Morgan

GRAMPIAN Transport is the first bus operator in Scotland to achieve the Investors in People staff training and development standard. For 550-employee Grampian Transport, achievement of the award is the culmination of more than two and a half years of hard work. Managing director **Dr Mike Mitchell** believes the award recognises the importance the company places on service standards and the training of employees.

"People are obviously a crucial aspect of the success of our business. The more we invest in the development of staff, the higher the quality of service we can provide for our customers. The IIP programme has involved staff at all levels throughout the company. Well-trained people deliver a clear message, which in turn reinforces our customer-first philosophy."

Presenting the Investors in People award to Grampian Transport, Grampian Enterprise chairman **Maitland Mackie** said: "With Grampian Transport being the only bus company in Scotland to win recognition, this award represents another significant first for Grampian in the Investor in People role of honour. IIP is an important stamp of approval for any company to have, giving them a strong competitive edge. By paying serious attention to the development of all employees, a company can ensure its workforce will provide a return on investment in the same way as any other properly managed asset."

Dr Mike Mitchell: 'Award important'

● Grampian Transport's coaching division, Grampian Coaches, which deals with private hire, local tours and extended UK and Continental work, has put all its drivers through the Scottish Vocational Qualification in coach driving. CBW

CBW Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly

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Europe/Eire one year's subscription £115 ❑
Airmail one year's subscription £147 ❑

What is your company's main business function:

Bus operator ❑
Coach operator ❑
Local government ❑

Fleet size (please specify):

Bus ❑
Coach ❑
Other ❑

Do you have responsibility for the recommendation / purchase and/or specification of the following (tick all that apply):

Parts/spares ❑
Oil/fuel ❑
Tyres ❑
Breakdown/recovery ❑
Insurance/finance ❑
Fuel cards ❑
Training ❑

By cheque: I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to EMAP Business Communications.
By credit card: I authorise you to debit my Mastercard/VISA/ DinersClub/Amex card for the amount of £ .....
Expiry date ..... /.....
By invoice: Please invoice my company ❑

Card number: ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

Signed .....

Name: .....
Job title .....
Company: .....
Address .....
.....
Postcode .....
Tel: .....

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